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THE Metropolitan

NEW YORK

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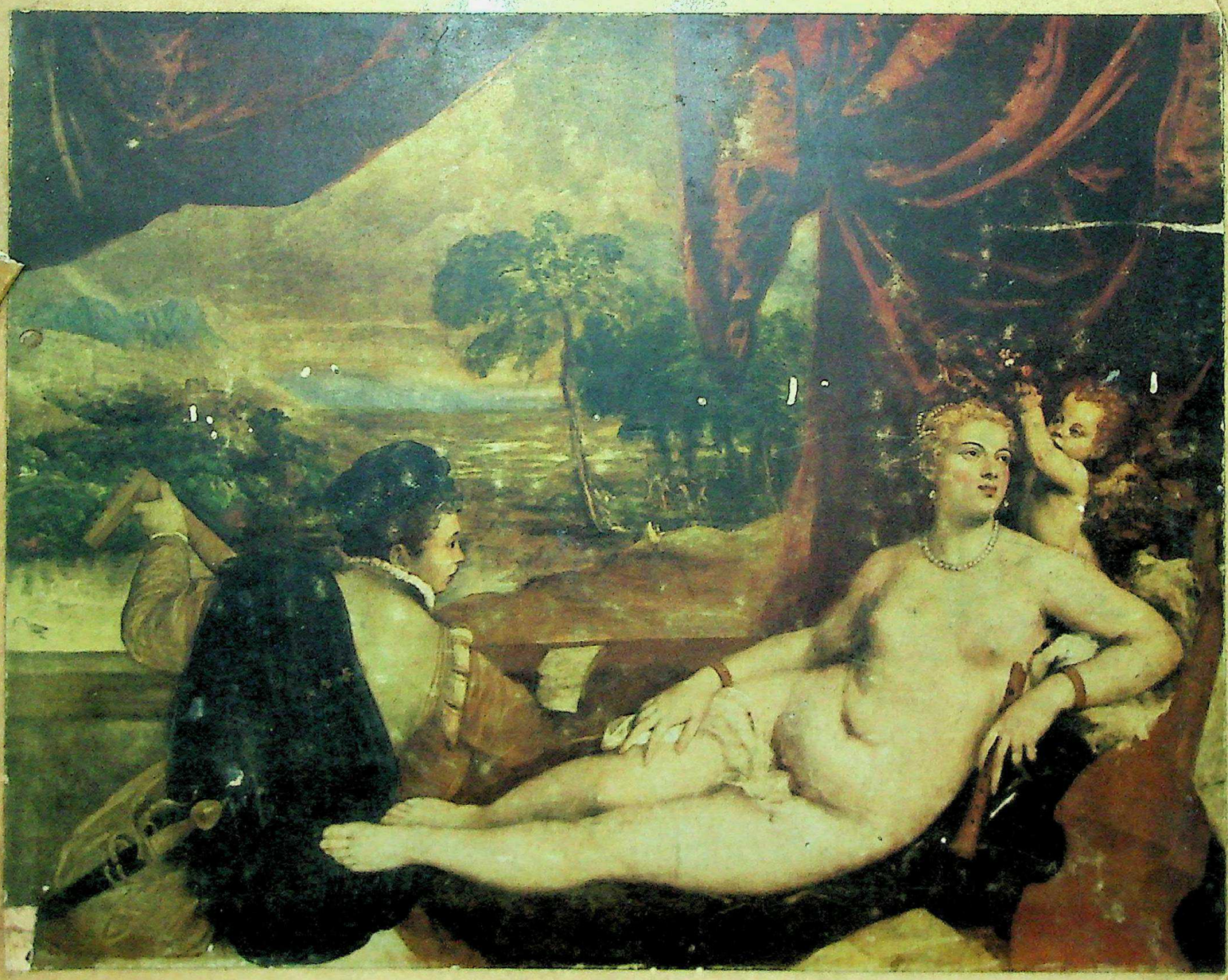

AN Abrams ART BOOK

Text by **THEODORE ROUSSEAU, JR.** *Curator of Paintings*

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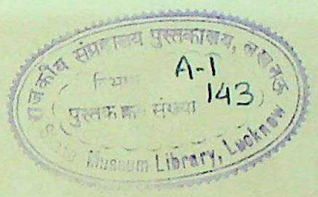

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Text by THEODORE ROUSSEAU, JR.

Curator of Paintings

राजकीय संग्रहालय पुस्तकालय, लखनऊ
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On the cover
VENUS AND THE LUTE PLAYER
by Titian
(see commentary on page 60)

MILTON S. FOX, *Editor*

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THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

NEW YORK IS THE UNDISPUTED METROPOLIS of the twentieth century and it is fitting that its museum should be called "The Metropolitan." Wherever one may travel in this country or in the world, it is so known, and recognized as the dean and greatest of American museums. In almost every way it is a reflection of the city in which it has grown. Primarily, in its physical appearance: a huge stone building stretching back irregularly into Central Park, a mixture of unrelated architectural styles and characteristically unmindful of the beauty of its appearance except for the Fifth Avenue facade. Even here we are reminded of the city's perennial hesitations in artistic matters by the huge stone lumps over the period columns intended for sculptured groups, but which no one has had the courage to carry out since they were put there over fifty years ago.

More than two million people visit the Museum every year and there are single days when the attendance reaches over twenty thousand and when a visitor will hear almost every language of the United Nations spoken in the galleries. Like the city, its make-up is of incredible complexity and it has grown in an irregular and haphazard fashion. Its content is staggering in richness, variety, and universality: more than a million objects, from twelfth-century Spanish to the Abstract-Expressionist canvases of the 1950s, through masterpieces of the Renaissance and the Baroque; from bronze vessels made four thousand years ago in China to Lippold's golden wire *Sun* commissioned by the Museum in 1954, through Gothic ivories and Renaissance marbles. Under its one roof are gathered objects which are customarily distributed among several museums in the other great cities of the world.

Over five hundred people work in more than twenty departments carrying out curatorial, administrative, and educational functions, in a spirit sometimes conservative and sometimes in the vanguard of similar institutions. The most important aspect of the Museum, the quality of its collections, depends of course on the curatorial staff. Located in one of the centers of the world's art

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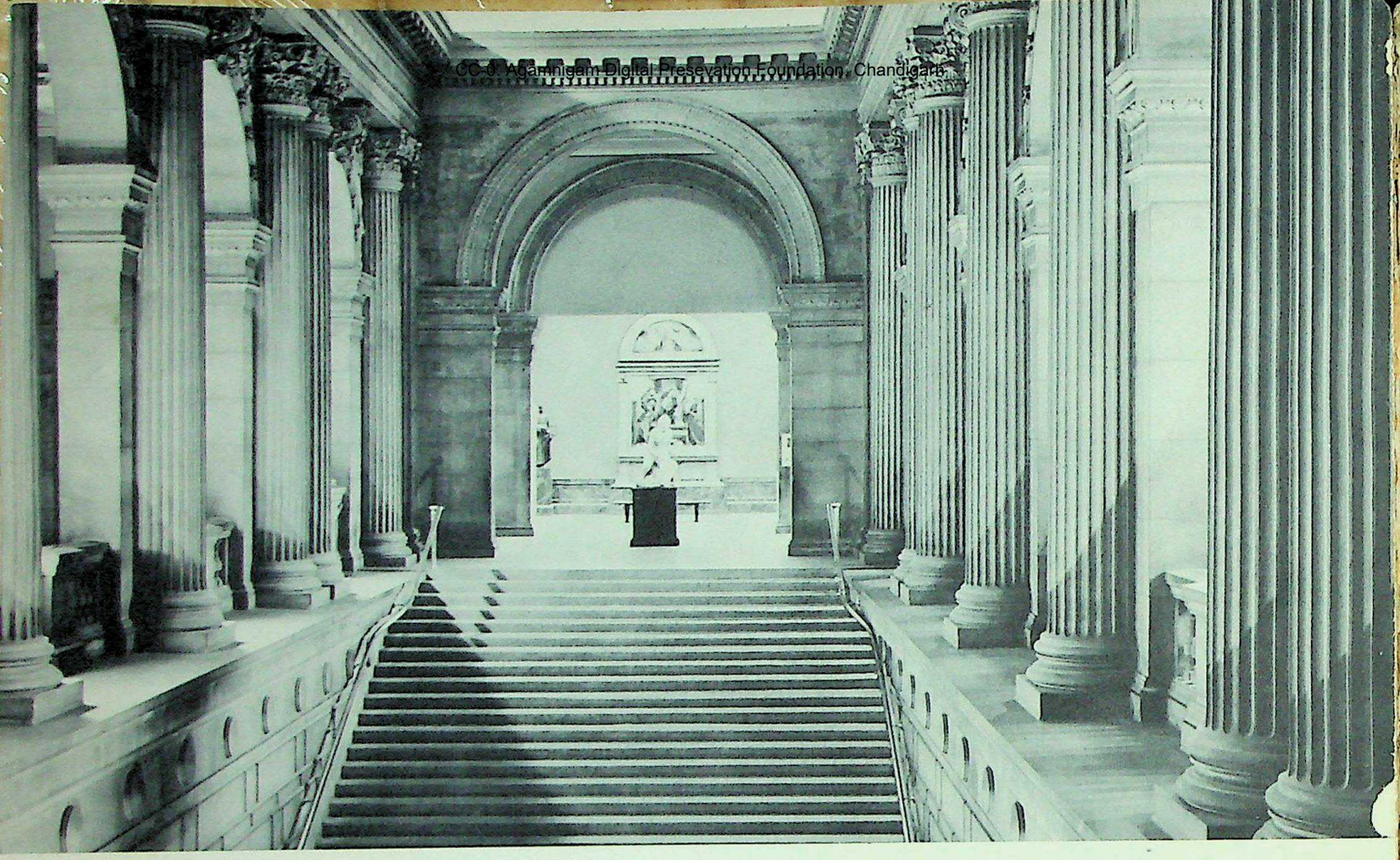
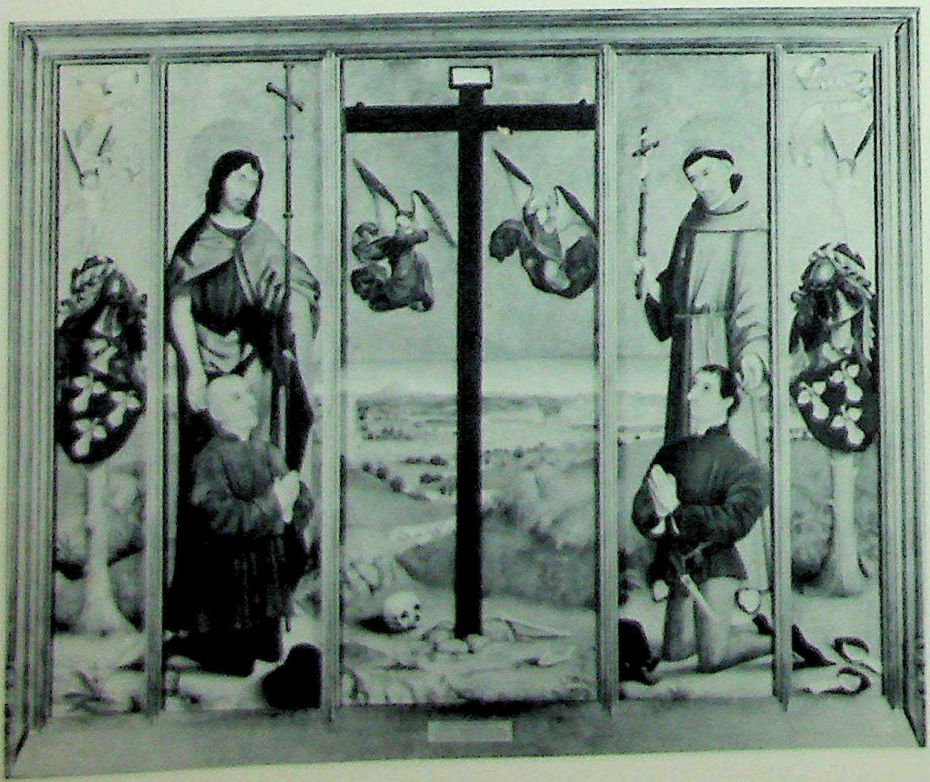


UNKNOWN FRENCH PAINTER *c. 1480*
THE PERUSSIS ALTARPIECE
Tempera and oil on wood, three panels, each 54½ x 23″

The clear white light in this picture and its simple unflattering realism are typical of French painting during the fifteenth century. The landscape, with its cool colors, is seen almost as through a crystal. The portraits are merciless in their objectivity. The surprising gold background, which seems lifted to reveal the sky above the landscape, may symbolize for us a time when the curtain of the Middle Ages was being raised to reveal nature and man as the center of the Renaissance world.



HOLBEIN *German, 1497/98-1543*
BENEDIKT VON HERTENSTEIN
Oil on paper, mounted on wood, 20¾ x 15½″

This portrait was painted when the artist was barely twenty years old. The sitter was the son of one of Holbein's first patrons, Jakob von Hertenstein, the mayor of Lucerne, whose newly constructed town house he decorated in 1517, the date inscribed on the picture.

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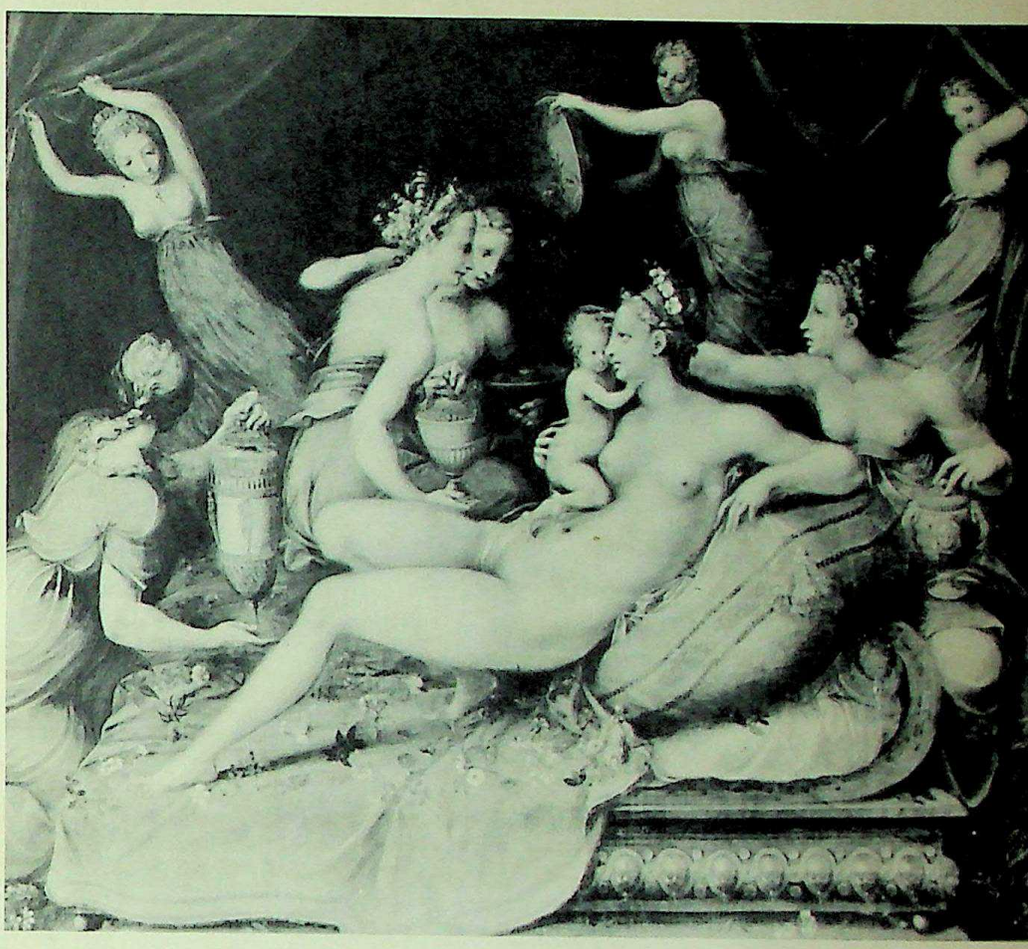
FONTAINEBLEAU SCHOOL
French, c. 1540-1560
THE BIRTH OF CUPID
Oil on wood, 42½ x 51⅜"

The combination of pleasantly sensuous and decorative qualities in this painting appealed to the Court of Francis I of France. The style, however, was universally popular in all the Courts of Europe during the sixteenth century. Its emphasis on the beauty and pleasures of this world made it easier to forget the social and religious upheavals dividing Western civilization.



trade and the only one in this country, the curator's job is a complex one. To acquire the finest in his field he must be familiar with the many facets of the New York market and have active sources of information abroad. He must also cultivate and encourage the collectors who are interested in the Museum. He is responsible for the display of the objects in his department, making them attractive and understandable to the public. Besides these essential duties he must keep abreast of the most recent progress in his field, must catalogue, watch over condition, write scholarly articles, arrange temporary exhibitions, and occasionally teach. Around these departments, concerned primarily with the works of art as such, are those in related activities: the department of conservation, which is responsible for the technical maintenance of the objects; the department of education and the Junior Museum, which explain the works of art—with an auditorium and concert hall to work with; the Library of more than 135,000 volumes for study; the restaurant to relax in; and finally the Administration which has the intricate task of keeping all this in working order and balancing the budget.

The idea of the Museum was born during a Fourth-of-July lunch at the Pré Catelan in Paris in 1866, when John Jay, our Ambassador to Germany at the time, proposed a "National Institution and Gallery of Art" to a group of New Yorkers who welcomed the idea and entrusted it for study to a characteristic and time honored New York institution, the Union League. Three years later the Art Committee of the Club rendered a report concerned mainly with organization but setting forth certain basic principles, which have persisted ever since. It rejected Government control or support as "utterly incompetent"; opposed direction by artists and advocated that authority should be in the hands of "judicious friends of art" of ample means. In the same year, by a legislative act, the Park Commissioners were authorized to erect and maintain in Central Park "a meteorological and astronomical observatory, and a museum of natural history and a gallery of art." It should be recorded that Tammany's Boss Tweed, of sometimes infamous memory, was largely responsible for the passage of this act.

In 1870 the State Legislature granted an act of incorporation to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Trustees started to raise $250,000. In the following year the statute was passed allowing the city to pay $500,000 for the museum building, which was to be municipal property. This arrangement, by which collections owned and cared for by a Board of Trustees are housed in a building owned and maintained by the municipality, has shown itself to be satisfactory and better adapted to American customs and habits of independence than the government control which prevails in other parts of the world. It became and still is a model for the constitutions of other museums throughout this country. For ten years the Museum moved from one temporary home to another—including at one time Dodsworth's Dancing Academy—until finally in 1880 it opened in its own building in Central Park under its first director, General di Cesnola, a former companion of Garibaldi who, during the Civil War, had founded a military training school in New York which later became the War Col-

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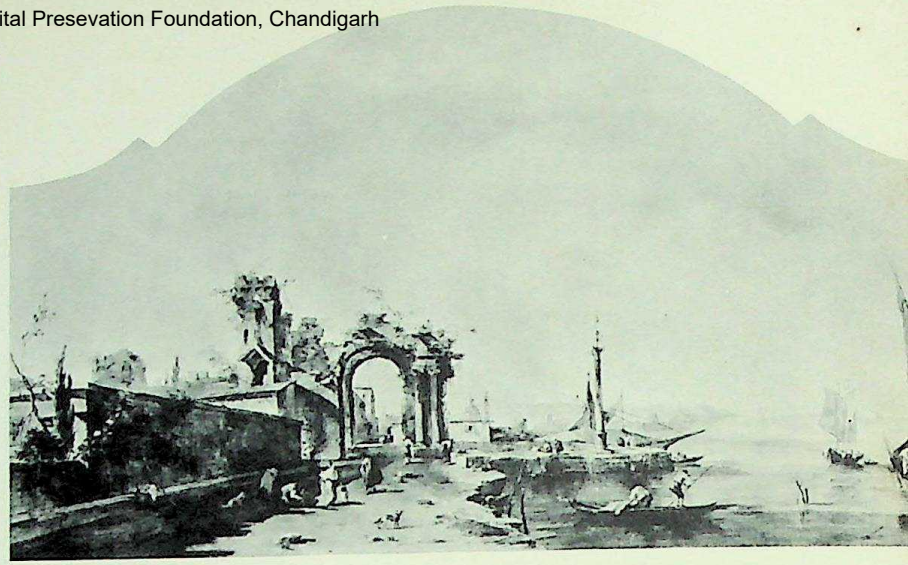

GUARDI *Venetian, 1712-1793*
FANTASTIC LANDSCAPE
Oil on canvas, 61¼ x 107½"

The feeling of light and air with which Guardi has filled this picture shows him to be a direct ancestor of the French Impressionists. With two companion pieces, also in the Museum's collection, it was painted to decorate a room in an Italian villa north of Venice. Its large scale is unusual and, with its other qualities, makes it the outstanding work of this master in the United States.

lege of the U.S. General Staff. It had a collection of 174 paintings, decorative art objects, casts of famous monuments, and the General's own group of Cypriote antiquities, the first of many great purchases.

From this time on the Museum grew gradually to its present form. Not with any logical sequence, for no museum can. It is always at the mercy of chance, of what is available on the market, and it must depend on the imagination and the taste of its officials and its patrons. The list of the Metropolitan's patrons is as extensive as it is fascinating, recalling the high points in the history of the city and of the country. It is a permanent testimony to American philanthropy and public spiritedness. A peculiar and striking aspect of these people's participation in the destiny of the Museum is the fact that in contrast to so many other institutions that owe their existence and success mainly to the inspiration and generosity of one man, no single individual has ever left a dominating mark on the Metropolitan. No matter how considerable the gift, it takes its place with the others, adding its own particular significance to the whole and somehow, by its inclusion, taking on a more solemn, more impressive quality.

The gifts began to come to the Museum immediately after it opened, and they are so numerous that it is impossible to mention more than a few of the most important. They are of different kinds: works of art, funds for the purchase of specific types of works of art, and funds to be used at the Museum's discretion. Some donors, like Miss Catherine Lorillard Wolfe, have given works of art to one department; in 1887 she bequeathed her collection of paintings with a sum for its upkeep and for further purchases. Others have made contributions of a more diverse nature. J. Pierpont Morgan's name can be found on outstanding objects in almost every department. One of the most magnificent gifts ever made to any institution is that of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The Cloisters, in Fort Tryon Park, springs from his generosity: it achieves the seemingly impossible—the re-creation of the Middle Ages in the New World—and brings them to life with masterpieces of the highest order. The Harkness gift of Egyptian material and paintings, the Altman and Bache collections, are all of extraordinary quality. George Blumenthal added to a brilliant gift in the field of decorative arts, his wise and farseeing stewardship of the Museum's funds. Covering a number of departments, though most important in paintings, the bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer is a model of disinterested, princely giving. More recently, Mrs. Catherine W. Wentworth added a munificent donation of money to her collection of French silver. Many others could be mentioned, whose gifts form the essential core of individual departments, such as Bashford Dean for Arms and Armor, Mrs. John Crosby for Musical Instruments, and Harry Brisbane Dick for Prints. Equally important are those who followed the example of Jacob S. Rogers and gave money for purchases at the discretion of the Museum, and one must not forget those who served as Trustees and by the unfailingly generous gift of their own time and wise counsel made possible the successful course which the Museum has followed.

This volume is dedicated to the Metropolitan's collection of Western painting which, although fortunately for the scope of the collections as a whole has not always been the main preoccupation of the Museum's authorities, has nevertheless since the beginning been its most important attraction for the public. This is more true in our time than ever before, because ever since the Impressionists launched their revolt against the Salon in the 1870s, painting has held the stage as that branch of the arts in which every extreme form of progress is given its first expression. It is the fountainhead of experimentation in an Age of Experimentation. The largest crowd is invariably in the picture galleries.

The collection began in 1871 with 174 paintings purchased as a group in Europe by William T. Blodgett, a Trustee, who offered them to the Museum at cost. They were in the majority Dutch and Flemish, with some examples of the French, Italian, and Spanish schools. Considering the possible dangers of such a wholesale purchase of works of art, their quality was excellent. A fair proportion of them is still considered worthy of hanging today and, among these the *Malle Babbe* by Frans Hals, the Guardi views of the Salute and the Rialto, and the pair of Oudrys are outstanding.

Since this beginning the collection has expanded considerably. It now numbers almost 3,000 items and covers the history of painting from Romanesque frescoes from Trevos to abstractions by Jackson Pollack.

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CANALETTO *Venetian, 1697-1768*

SCENE IN VENICE: THE PIAZZETTA
Oil on canvas, 51½ x 51¼″

The sharply drawn outlines and carefully modeled forms of the buildings are characteristic of this artist's work which always recalls an architect's drawings. The sensuous color and the sky with its billowing clouds vividly recall the atmosphere of Venice, which was as popular with foreigners in the eighteenth century as it is today. The scene which he represents has remained unchanged.

TIEPOLO *Venetian, 1696-1770*

ST. THECLA PRAYING
Oil on canvas, 32 x 17⅞″

This is a sketch for a great painting which still hangs above the High Altar in the Cathedral at Este, near Padua. It shows St. Thecla kneeling before the town which she is delivering from the plague. In spite of its free and sketchy execution and its blond, decorative color, this little picture also conveys the poignant religious message intended by the painter.

Unfortunately, the Middle Ages in Italy cannot be represented in a museum by any monumental fresco, and only in these can the great early Italians be seen at their best. However, the small *Epiphany* from the studio of Giotto (page 14) has, despite its size, much of the feeling of the larger works. The big altarpiece by Taddeo Gaddi shows the Giottesque tradition and conveys a real idea of the scale which was current at the time. The *Crucifixion*, with scenes from the life of the Virgin, from Duccio's studio, bequeathed by George Blumenthal, the little *Madonna and Child* by one of his followers, and the *Triptych* by Segna are admirable examples of the conservatism of Siena, which combined the grace and decorative solemnity of Byzantine art with a new sensitivity to human feelings.

The persistence of this tradition long after the medieval spirit had been forgotten in other parts of Italy can be enjoyed in the delightfully picturesque little panels by Sassetta and Giovanni di Paolo (pages 14 and 18). This same style, as it manifested itself in Venice and Spain, is richly represented both in the Museum and in The Cloisters.

The last flowering of the Middle Ages in The Netherlands, when they were ruled by the art loving Court of Burgundy, can be fully enjoyed at the Metropolitan, for the representation of painting of this school is one of the finest and most complete in the Collection. Its beginnings can be seen in the *Crucifixion* and *Last Judgment* by Hubert van Eyck (page 16), the elder of the two brothers traditionally credited with the invention of oil painting. These little panels, formerly in The Hermitage and sold to the Museum by the Soviet Government, are still reminiscent of manuscript illumination; their jewel-like colors recall that the Van Eycks also worked in stained glass. Rogier van der Weyden, the dominant master of the school, can be seen in every aspect of his art: the large altarpiece of the *Annunciation*, the moving *Christ Appearing to His Mother* (colorplate 2), and several portraits. Memling, the last in this line of masters, is represented by two of his greatest works: the portraits of Tommaso Portinari (page 22) and his wife. These truly express the last creative surge of the early Flemish School and in them one already feels a suggestion of the classical serenity of the Italian High Renaissance. Petrus Christus' marriage of Flemish elements to a Mediterranean feeling for form can be fully studied in two religious panels and in the portrait of a Carthusian,

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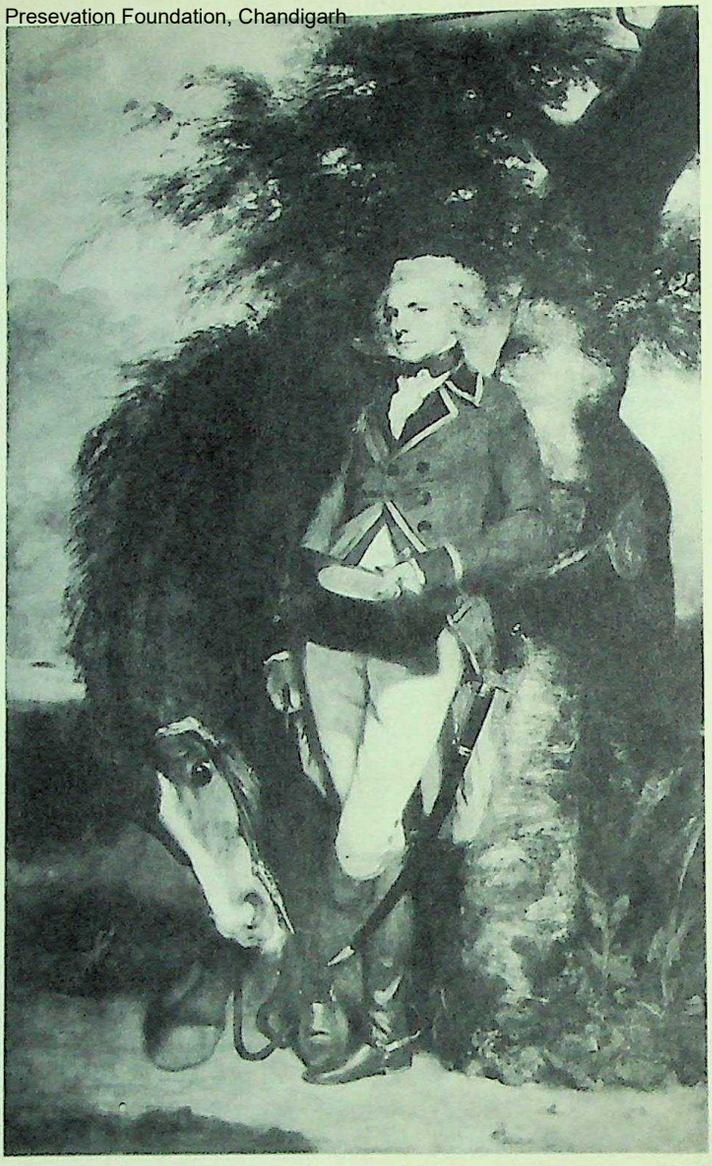

REYNOLDS *British, 1723-1792*
COLONEL GEORGE K. H. COUSSMAKER
Oil on canvas, 93¾ x 57¼"

Combining elegant self-assurance with a certain romantic dash, Reynolds has created here the ideal of the English gentleman during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He had to be handsome, intelligent, athletic, and on occasion a soldier. His entire appearance had to illustrate his position as a member of the "upper" class.

his finest, in the Bache Collection; as can the sweet naturalism of Dierck Bouts (page 16) and the gentle sentiment of Gerard David (colorplate 5)—both in a number of examples. The minor masters of the school are also present, so that there are few museums in the world where the Flemish can be better or more fully enjoyed.

French art, which partakes both of northern and southern elements and gives us perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the change from medieval to modern times, is also richly represented. Throughout, it is distinguished by its deliberate reserve and the cool clarity of its vision. The recently acquired *Perussis Altarpiece* (page 6) is fascinating because it exemplifies the transition not only between the two periods but between the northern and the southern schools.

No picture of major importance of the Early Renaissance in Florence has yet come to the Museum. However, the freshness and vigor of the period, its candor and innocence can be acutely felt in the bright and lovely *Birth of the Virgin* by Fra Carnevale (page 18). Its awakened interest in every aspect of man is illustrated by the young Castagno's *St. Sebastian* and in the two strange visualizations of the life of primitive man on the *cassone* panels by Piero di Cosimo, which came to the Museum as early as 1875.

The awakening of the same curiosity in the North and in Venice are to be found in Mantegna's severe and carefully studied little *Adoration of the Magi* and in Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna Adoring the Sleeping Child* (page 24), which still impresses us with its nobility in spite of the ravages of time. His *Portrait of a Man*, in the Bache Collection, with its rich forms and golden light brings us to the culmination of this period; whereas Giorgione's sensitive and romantic portrait, long known as Ariosto, foreshadows complexities of the sixteenth century.

The High Renaissance, a brief moment lasting only twenty years when artists seemed so sure of what they wanted to say and how to express it, and when the general mood was one of optimism and serenity—this is exemplified by Raphael's great Colonna altarpiece (colorplate 6). The Holkham Venus by Titian (cover) and the great Veronese *Mars and Venus* (colorplate 8) partake of the same splendid composure and confidence.

The style in Italian painting which resulted from the distress and bewilderment produced in men's minds and spirits by the religious wars is not well represented in the Metropolitan. Bronzino's *Portrait of a Young Man* (page 24), one of his masterpieces, though more deliberately stylized, still harks back to the High Renaissance, and Tintoretto's dynamic *Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* carries in it none of the inner anguish expressed by truly Mannerist painting. This distress and the resulting difference in attitude to nature which came to be seen as something enormous and overwhelming rather than easily grasped, is visible in Bruegel's *Harvesters* (colorplate 7). However, the very essence of Mannerism, its culminating expression, was achieved by an expatriate Greek in Spain, El Greco, of whose works the Museum possesses a unique group: his only landscape (colorplate 10), his finest portrait (page 32), and two superlative religious compositions, the most recently acquired of which, the *Apocalyptic Vision*, is surely the most "modern" work of any Old Master.

The Museum's Spanish paintings are few in number but high in quality. The noble and serious *Holy Family* by Ribera (colorplate 11), Zurbaran's *The Child Virgin*, and *The Feast at Emmaus* by the youthful Velazquez, show us the beginnings under Italian Caravaggiesque influences; whereas the brilliant and mature sketch by the latter, of the Conde Duque de Olivares on a white charger (page 32), and Murillo's *Madonna* and portraits exemplify the fully developed Golden Age.

As is fitting in a city which began as New Amsterdam, the group of seventeenth-century Dutch paintings is exceptionally fine. As we have seen, the Museum opened with a worthy representation of these painters. Subsequent gifts, such as that of Benjamin Altman, have

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built up a collection which can rival any in the world. The Metropolitan owns 28 paintings by Rembrandt, 13 by Hals, 4 by Vermeer. The lesser masters are equally well represented: Jacob Ruisdael by *The Wheatfields* (page 26), his masterpiece; Van Goyen by his *View of Haarlem*, a miniature tour de force; Gabriel Metsu; Gerard Terborch; Willem Kalf; and many other works of characteristically craftsmanlike perfection, each one intimate and personal, essentially a private possession to be enjoyed in the home.

In contrast, the art of their contemporaries in the southern Netherlands was aristocratic and worldly even in its mysticism. They were Catholics: their spiritual center was in Rome, rooted in Classical civilization. Rubens, the undisputed leader of the school, whose painting is the very essence of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, can be seen in every aspect of his art—from works entirely by his own hand, like the sketches and the vital and splendid *Venus and Adonis* (colorplate 9), to the large composite commissions executed by his helpers, with final touches by the master. In the work of his pupil, Van Dyck, the courtly life of the period lives again. His portrait of the Duke of Lennox from the Marquand Collection, is one of his masterpieces in its aristocratic simplicity and graciousness.

The Museum is not rich in Italian painting of the seventeenth century. Caravaggio's *Musicians* (page 34), painted when he was only about twenty years old, shows the lyrical realism with which he started before developing the dramatic chiaroscuro that was to dominate the Baroque style in Italy, as exemplified in the *Christ and the Women of Samaria* by his follower Carraciollo. But the Museum has yet to acquire one of the large altarpieces or mythological compositions by Guercino, or one of the Carracci in which the period found its fullest expression.

French painting of this time is better represented. It never gave way to the theatrical turbulence of the Baroque, even when such a mood might have suited the subject of a picture, as in the *Rape of the Sabine Women* by Poussin (colorplate 14). The delicate and melancholy poetry of Claude's landscapes, as seen in his *Ford* and *Sunrise*, was highly original at the time and prophetic of the style of landscape painting which was to flourish more than one hundred years later. Philippe de Champagne's icy analysis of Colbert (page 40), and the statuesque, classical allegory by Laurent de la Hire mirror the formal grandeur of Louis XIV's France. Even before the death of the Roi Soleil, at the very beginning of the eighteenth century, people had begun to grow impatient of the pomp and ceremony which had come to pervade every aspect of life. They turned away from art which was serious and sought to teach a lesson. A picture like Watteau's *Mezzetin* (page 42) is typical of the new mood of reverie and romance, and of the atmosphere of charm and grace which people now looked for in painting. Boucher and Fragonard carried this spirit to its climax; the former, the favorite painter of the King and his intelligent and cultivated mistress, Madame de Pompadour, is the perfect reflection of the love of richness and delight in the sensual aspects of life which characterized the century. Fragonard's temperament was joyful and dashing, as can be seen in his poetic little landscapes in the Bache Collection and in the little sketch of an Italian family done during a youthful trip in Italy. Nattier's portrait of Madame de Marsollier and her lovely little daughter shows what a master he could be not only of characterization, but also as a colorist and painter of light.

The persistence of realism, always present in some

INGRES *French, 1780-1867*
PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN
Oil on canvas, 29¾ x 22⅞"

Although it was painted while the artist was still a young man, this portrait already shows the qualities which make him great: the rhythmic and highly expressive use of line, the incisive characterization which combines realism with an almost icy reserve, and a powerful but intensely disciplined temperament.

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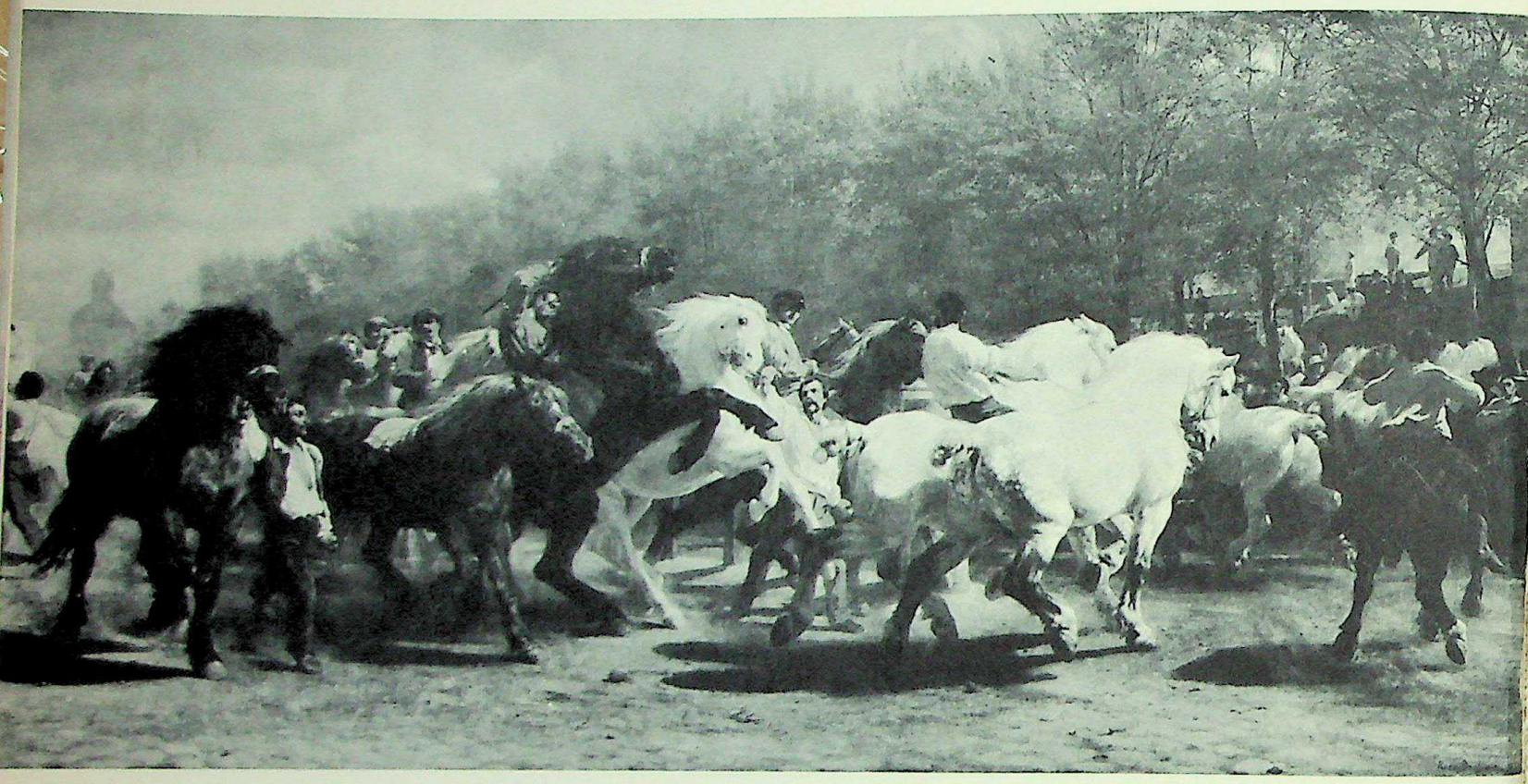
ROSA BONHEUR *French, 1822-1899*

THE HORSE FAIR

Oil on canvas, 96¼ x 199½"

Surely the largest ever painted by a woman, this picture has known both the height of popularity and the depth of critical disgrace. However, its robust assurance, and its free and painterly handling, lacking all self-consciousness, give it a permanent place in nineteenth century painting.



aspect of French art in every period, is admirably exemplified by Chardin's sympathetic *Boy Blowing Bubbles* (page 44), the honest and unaffected draftsmanship of which gives it a timeless quality unusual in this century.

In eighteenth-century Italy a similar change took place and the Museum is most fortunate in the richness of its Venetian paintings of this time. When Tiepolo's ceiling was in its original place in the Barbaro Palace, it must have brought the heavens into the room in a most breath-taking fashion. Each of the series of small sketches by him is an astonishing example of his effortless virtuosity. The three large imaginary landscapes from the Coloredo Castle in the Friuli, unique as a group, are the last expression of the Venetian romanticism that began with Giorgione, and at the same time a prophecy of Impressionism. The two large Panninis, with their profusion of views of modern and ancient Rome, bring us into close contact with the intellectual climate of the Age of Reason, while the little genre scenes by Pietro Longhi conjure up the intimate side of Venetian life.

The English contemporaries of these painters were inspired by a different spirit. They painted with a stylish realism which, while it partakes of the Venetian Renaissance, is closer to what was to follow in France during the nineteenth century. Gainsborough alone stands out by a certain affinity with contemporary French painting, as can be seen in his *Portrait of Mrs. Elliott* and the lovely sketch of his daughter's head which reminds us of Goya or Fragonard. Reynolds, Romney, Hoppner, Constable, and Raeburn all seem to belong to a later period. The latter's direct painting and spontaneous brushwork in *The Drummond Children* anticipates Manet. Constable's small sketch of Stoke-by-Nayland could have been painted yesterday. It is easy to understand its appeal to Delacroix and the Impressionists.

Goya, who stands astride both centuries, is represented in the Museum by an outstanding group of paintings which show every facet of his powerful temperament. His typically Spanish vigor and incisiveness are always present, but in the *Portrait of Don Sebastian Martinez* and in the delightful *Don Manuel Osorio* in the Bache Collection, he is a contemporary of Tiepolo or Nattier, whereas the later *Bullfight* (page 46) and *Portrait of Tiburcio Perez* are painted with a romantic realism akin to Courbet and Géricault.

The Museum's French nineteenth-century paintings are the culmination of its collections and this is as it should be since it corresponds to the taste of our time throughout the world. This fortunate situation is due mainly to the prophetic taste and truly magnificent generosity of Mr. and Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer. Thanks to them the Museum owns an incomparable group of Corot, Courbet, Manet, Monet, Degas, Renoir, and Cézanne. In addition, the brilliant purchase, as early as 1907, of Renoir's monumental *Madame Charpentier and Her Children* (colorplate 20), and the bequests and gifts of Irwin Davis, William Church Osborn, Samuel

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Lewisohn and, more recently, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ittleson, Richard Bernhardt, and others have made the Museum supreme in this field.

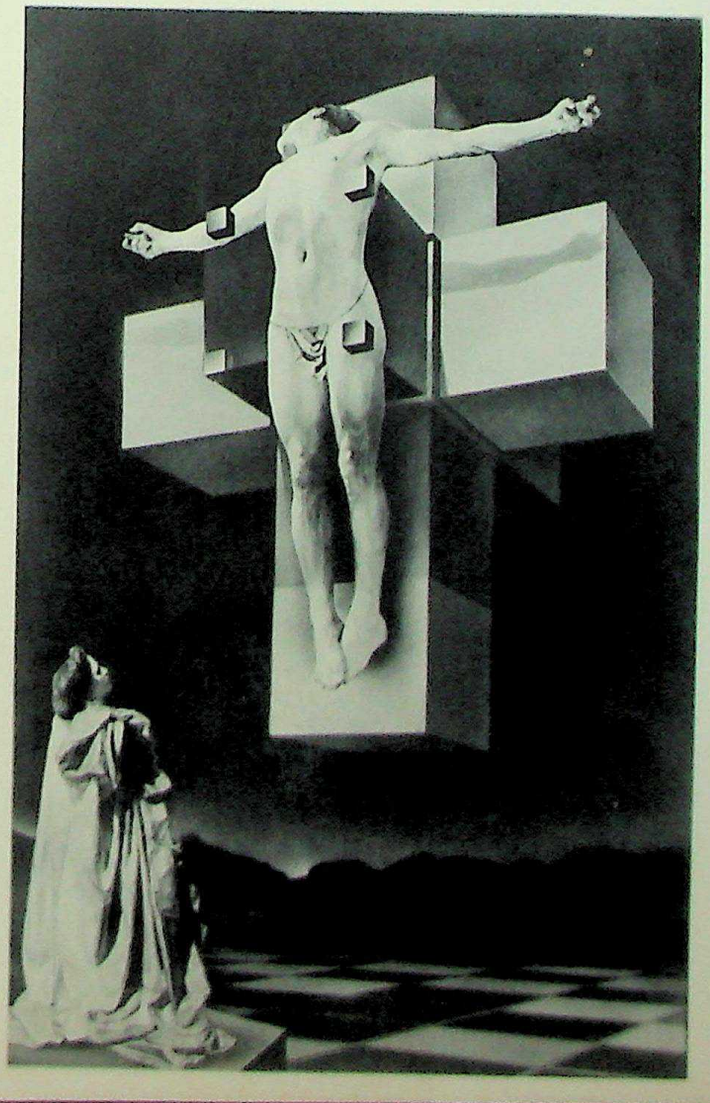
However, there is another aspect of the collection which makes this nineteenth-century section even more significant. It includes with this group of paintings so highly fashionable today an important and complete representation of the works of the Salon painters, who were as popular with our fathers as those who revolted against their dominant style have become with us. Outstanding among these are Rosa Bonheur's *Horse Fair* (page 12), still one of the most popular pictures; Bastien Lepage's *Joan of Arc;* and Regnault's *Salome.*

To the open-minded visitor interested in the history of taste, the confrontation in the Galleries of these pictures corresponding to such widely diverging tastes cannot fail to be fascinating and instructive.

The Museum's collection of twentieth-century painting is small, a deliberate effort being made to maintain its proportion to the great schools of the past. Picasso, the dominant figure of our time, is well represented in his early period by the romantic *Actor* and the *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* (page 58). There is an uneven but distinguished representation of Vuillard, Derain, Modigliani, Rouault, and Soutine.

PICASSO *Spanish, school of Paris, born 1881*
LA COIFFURE
Oil on canvas, 68⅝ x 39¼"

The muted harmony of grays and pinks and the simplicity of the means of expression belong to the artist's early, romantic period. His deliberate avoidance of any show of facility and the stylization of types mark the beginning of a new period in his career, influenced by non-European art.



This terminates a brief description of the Picture Gallery as it stands today. However, its present state is only momentary, its growth is continuous, the gaps are constantly being filled, new masterpieces added. To be sure, they are growing rarer and more difficult to export from their countries of origin, but the student of history knows that institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum are timeless, that the movement of works of art is inevitable, so that growth and increase seem permanently assured. The Collection is indeed a great collection, worthy of any of the great capitals in the civilized world. We have come a long way from the provincialism of John Adams who denied the country's need of the fine arts in favor of the mechanical. If any were needed, the Metropolitan Museum is an incontrovertible proof of our country's maturity and its readiness for world leadership.

DALI *Spanish, born 1904*
CRUCIFIXION
Oil on canvas, 76¾ x 48⅝"

The strange and highly original conception of this picture, together with its seemingly traditional technique, give it a peculiar fascination. It stands out as one of the rare works on a religious theme created in a period when major artists do not concern themselves with this kind of subject matter.

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WORKSHOP OF GIOTTO
Florentine, before 1337
THE EPIPHANY
Tempera on wood, gold background, 17¾ x 17¼"

Although probably painted by assistants, it nevertheless has many of the best qualities of the master's work: the monumental structure, powerfully modeled forms and, above all, the intensely human and deeply moving quality of the action.

SASSETTA *Sienese, 1392-1450*
THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI
Tempera on wood, 8½ x 11⅝"

A fragment cut from a larger panel representing the Epiphany, this little picture typifies the gaiety and delight in picturesque and decorative details of life which characterized the decline of the Middle Ages and the awakening of the Renaissance in Siena. Its light color harmony and clarity of definition will always make it one of the most charming and appealing paintings of its time.

colorplate 1 ⟶

CRIVELLI

Venetian, active by 1457, died after 1495

MADONNA AND CHILD
Tempera on wood, 14⅞ x 9"

This gem-like little picture stands halfway between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The heavy gold brocade, the jeweled halo and the serious frontal pose of the Virgin and Child belong to the Byzantine tradition already centuries old. The amazing rendering of naturalistic details, such as the fly with its amusing shadow, the ultra-realistic festoon of cucumbers and apples, the cracked parapet, and the delicate landscape, belong to the new spirit. Much of the picture's fine quality is due to the beauty and perfection of its technique. Crivelli was a virtuoso of tempera painting. The brilliant blond color, the precision and clarity of forms, and the enamel-like surface of the paint make this panel as precious and perfect as a piece of finely wrought goldsmith's work.

Crivelli proudly signed this picture as a Venetian. However, he worked most of his life in the provinces which, doubtless, is the reason why his style retained so many traditional elements and remained so extremely personal at a time when his contemporaries, such as Mantegna and the Bellini brothers, were making history with their innovations in Venice.

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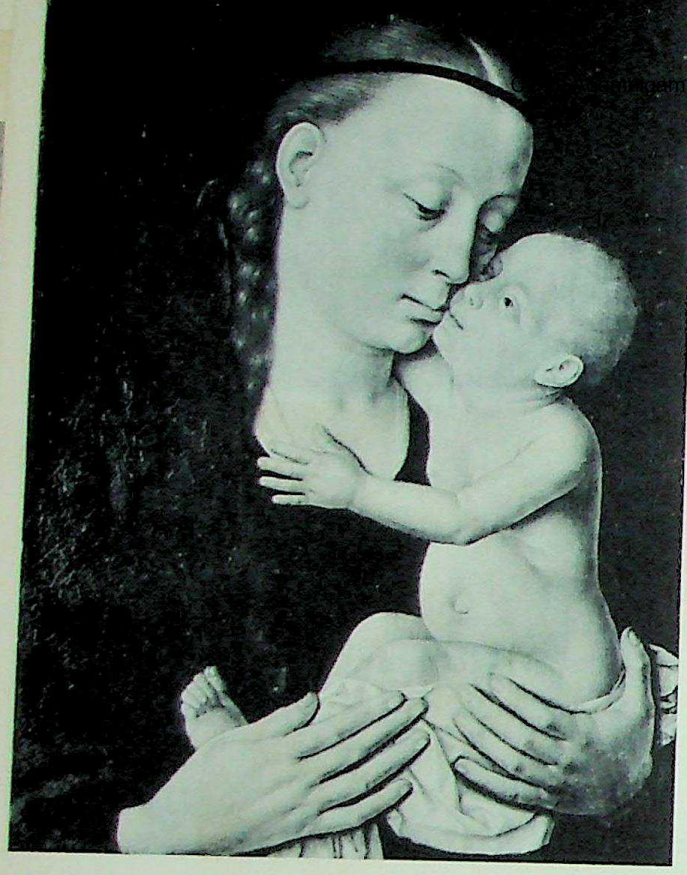

BOUTS *Flemish, active by 1457; died 1475*
THE VIRGIN AND CHILD
Tempera and oil on wood, 8½ x 6½″

The warm and wholesome character of this Madonna and Child, the feeling the picture gives us of their physical presence, are typical of Bouts. Perhaps because he came from the part of the Netherlands which is now Holland, his attitude to his subjects was less elegant and preoccupied with decorative values than that of his great contemporaries, such as Van der Weyden and Memling. It is one of Bouts' early works.

HUBERT VAN EYCK *Flemish, died 1426*
THE CRUCIFIXION; THE LAST JUDGMENT
Tempera and oil transferred to canvas, each 22¾ x 7¾″

Painted by the elder of the Van Eycks, who have been credited with the invention of oil painting, these panels are in general conception still related to miniature illumination. However, a group like the Mourning Maries suggests a much larger scale and the brilliant, jewel-like colors are already those we associate with the beauty of Flemish painting in the early Renaissance.

colorplate 2 →

VAN DER WEYDEN

Flemish, c. 1400-1464

CHRIST APPEARING TO HIS MOTHER
Tempera and oil on wood, 25 x 15″

The scene depicted in this panel was a favorite during the Middle Ages and is described with touching detail in the medieval book *The Mirror of the Blessed Life*. This tells us how Christ, after his resurrection on Easter Morning, in honor to his mother appeared first to her.

Their greeting is extremely reserved but, in spite of their rather formal gestures, we feel a deep human emotion. The ability to impart strong feeling distinguished Rogier van der Weyden from his contemporaries. The picture is painted with great delicacy and with infinite attention to every variation of surface. It suggests a little shrine of goldsmith's work. The light, cool color harmony emphasizes the space around the figures and makes us conscious of the air in the room and the landscape.

The panel was originally part of a triptych bequeathed by Queen Isabella the Catholic of Spain to the Cathedral of Granada, in the treasury where the other two panels, a Pietà and a Nativity, are still preserved. A copy of this picture exists in the Berlin Museum.

detail from the Crucifixion, *at left*

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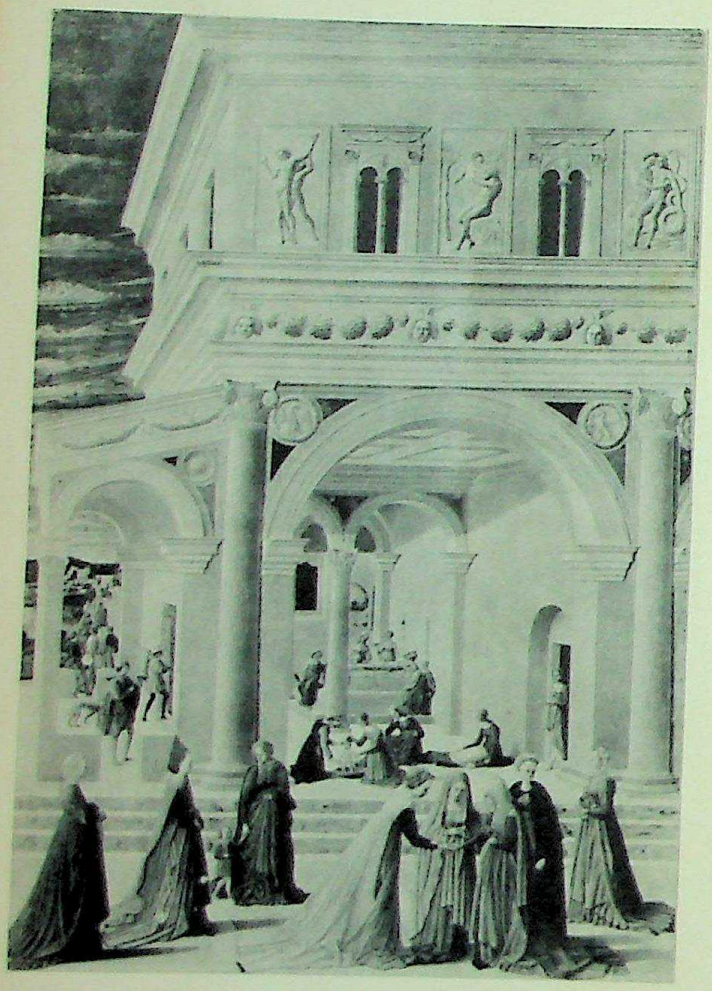

colorplate 3 ⟶

ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO

Florentine, 1433-1498

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG LADY

Tempera on wood, 18½ x 13″

Such profile portraits of lovely young women were fashionable in Florence during the fifteenth century. This is a masterpiece of subtle, curving lines and an exceptionally delicate harmony of pale pink and blue, admirably suited to bring out the personality of the model. The background reminds us of an Italian summer sky. The whole is wonderfully limpid, and simple. All details, such as the jewelry and the brocade, are subordinated to this effect. Its delicate and accomplished technique makes it one of the masterpieces of Florentine painting.

Pollaiuolo was famous for his fine draftsmanship. Both sculptor and painter, he carried on the traditions initiated by Donatello and Ghiberti. In his approach to the representation of the human figure, he bridges the gap between the Early Renaissance and Michelangelo.

FRA CARNEVALE

Umbrian, active by 1456, died 1484

THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

Oil and tempera on wood, 57 x 37⅝″

Believed to have been painted by an almost unknown Umbrian monk, this charming picture seems to have in it the very essence of the Early Renaissance. The artist has shown the Birth of the Virgin as it would have taken place in one of the palaces of his own time, as a normal event without any drama or evidence of the supernatural.

GIOVANNI DI PAOLO

Sienese, 1402/3-c. 1482

PARADISE

Tempera on canvas, transferred from wood, 18⅝ x 16″

This charming little panel, which shows the souls of famous people greeting each other in Paradise where they mingle with angels in a beautiful garden, although painted in the middle of the fifteenth century, still has the character of a medieval tapestry. Its tender poetry recalls the work of Fra Angelico, and is one of the reasons for supposing that the artist may have worked in Florence early in his career.

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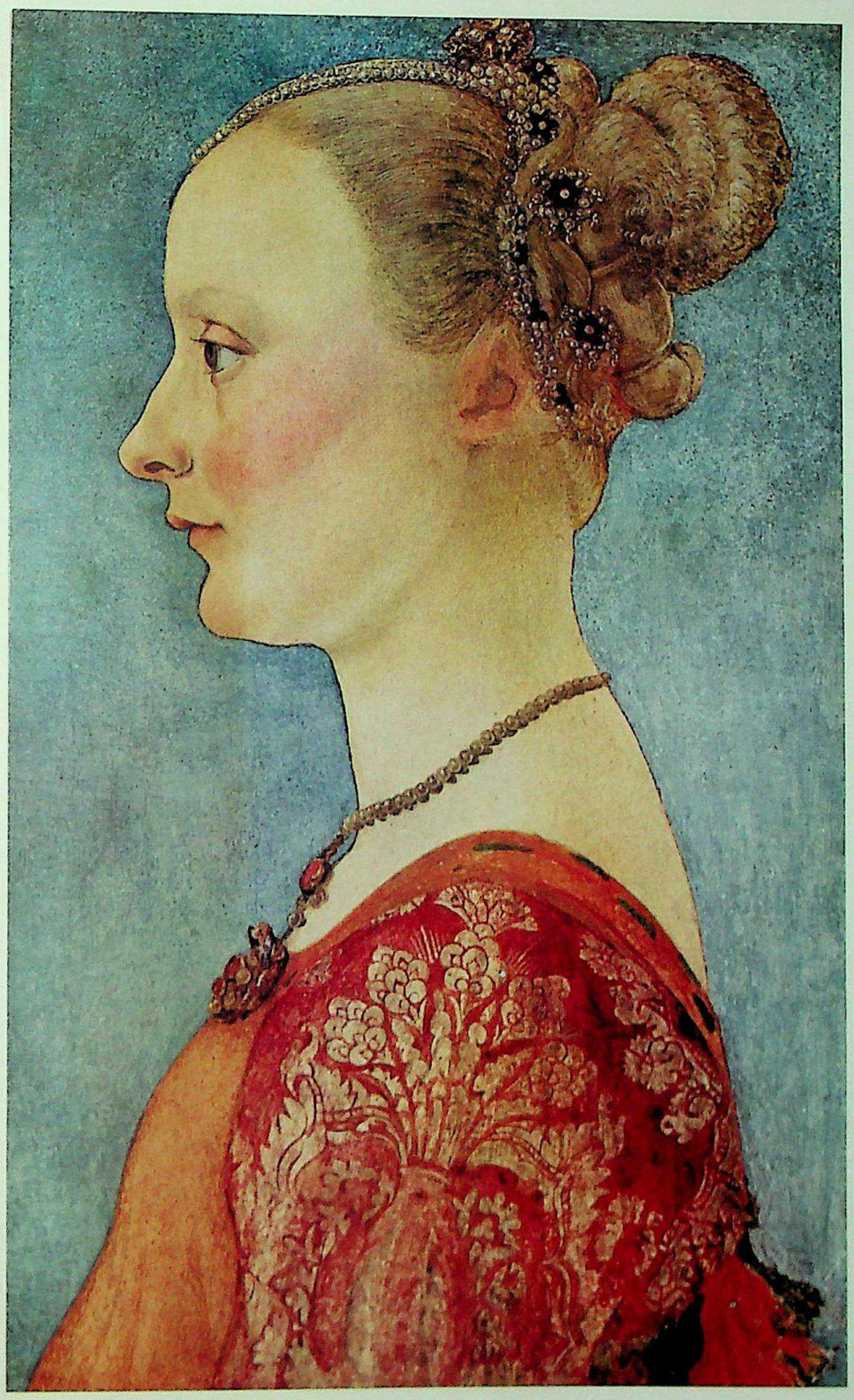

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CASTAGNO *Florentine, 1423-1457*

ST. SEBASTIAN

Tempera on wood, 56⅞ x 26¼"

St. Sebastian was very popular during the Renaissance and this panel was probably painted as an offering to him. His help was invoked against the plague which ravaged the country periodically during this period. The figure shows the artist's interest in anatomy and solidity of form. This is admirably brought out by placing him high up against the pale blue sky.

colorplate 4 ⟶

BOTTICELLI

Florentine, 1444/45-1510

THE LAST COMMUNION OF ST. JEROME

Tempera on wood, 13½ x 10"

In spite of its small size, this picture is filled with intense and poignant feeling. The effort of the dying Saint, who has arisen for the last time, his concentration as he strains to receive the Holy Communion, are brought out on the one hand by the attentive and affectionate gesture of the officiating priest, and by the tender helpfulness of the two young monks, who support him. Placing the scene in a small house made of matted straw, the warm color harmony of browns and reds and, above all, the way in which Botticelli's expressive use of line leads our eye always to the dying Saint's face, combine to give the picture its strong religious feeling.

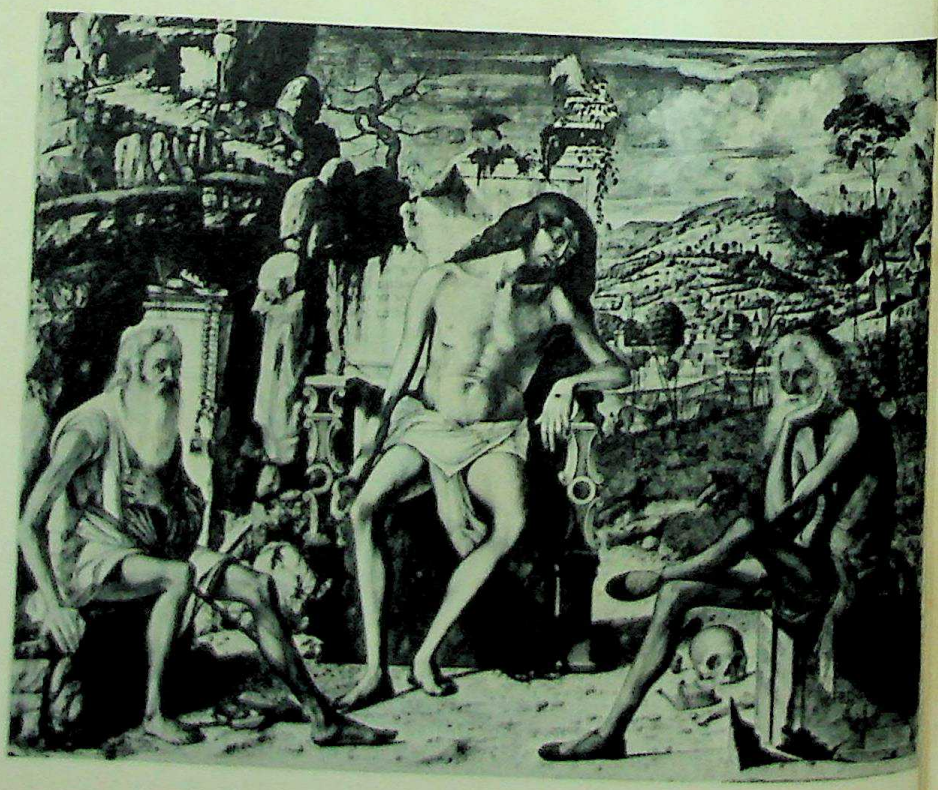
When he painted this, Botticelli had become a fervent follower of the great preacher and reformer Savonarola. He had turned his back on the worldly mythological subjects, that had been his favorites during the first part of his life, and applied all his understanding of love and his wonderful sense of grace and rhythm to painting religious subjects.

CARPACCIO *Venetian, c. 1455-c. 1523*

THE MEDITATION ON THE PASSION

Tempera on wood, 27⅞ x 34¾"

This is an elaborate allegory in which every figure, every small detail, has its special meaning. The dead Christ, seated on a ruined throne, is in the center. On the left is St. Jerome with his lion, and on the right, Job. The central meaning of the picture is connected with the reunion of these three figures, since Job's writings are interpreted by St. Jerome to prefigure the Passion of Christ. Carpaccio, with his glowing, transparent color, defines every part of the picture in a charming way, which makes it enjoyable as the reading of an ancient chronicle.



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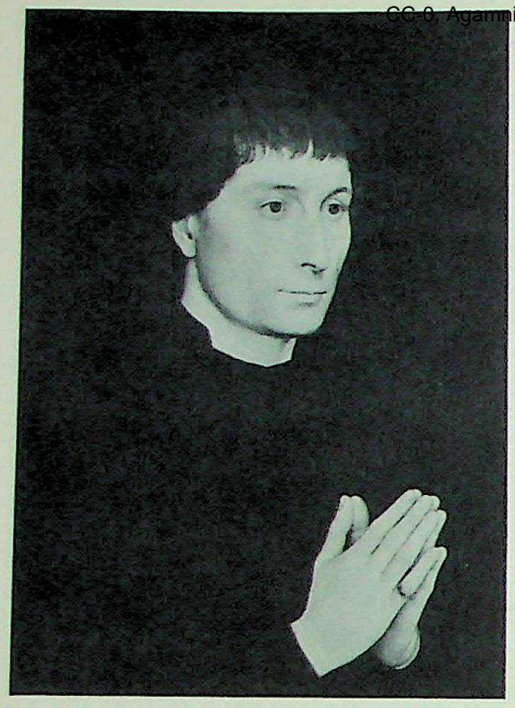

MEMLING *Flemish, active c. 1465; died 1494*
TOMMASO PORTINARI
Tempera and oil on wood, 17⅞ x 13¼″

The sitter was the representative of the Medici bank in Bruges; a member of the same family as Dante's Beatrice, he was a friend of the great men of his day: Lorenzo the Magnificent, Charles the Bold, the Emperor Maximilian. He was also a patron of the arts and commissioned some of the best known works of Memling and Hugo van der Goes. The position of his hands in prayer indicates that this portrait was probably originally combined with a painting or statue of some devotional subject.

colorplate 5 ⟶

GERARD DAVID

Flemish, active by c. 1484, died 1523

THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL
Tempera and oil on wood, 30 x 24″

This is the left wing of a diptych representing the Annunciation, which the artist has represented as taking place in the Virgin's paneled bedroom. It is a departure from the earlier Italian tradition, according to which the event is shown as taking place in the open, beneath a portico. Northern artists found the interior setting more intimate and appealing.

The picture combines medieval elements with influences from Italy. The painting of textures, the delight in variation of surface quality, and the deep, enamel-like colors are Flemish, inherited from the Van Eycks, whereas the emotional feeling may well be an influence of Rogier van der Weyden. The impression that we get of the physical presence of the Angel, who is standing with his full weight on the ground, his cloak still in motion from his flight through the air, and the depth and spaciousness of the room, are lessons learnt by the artist from Italian painting. His dignity and aristocracy, the subdued harmony of color, and deep religious feeling show the picture to have been painted toward the end of the artist's life, well after the beginning of the sixteenth century.

DURER *German, 1471-1528*
THE VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ST. ANNE
Tempera and oil on canvas, transferred from wood, 23⅝ x 19⅝″

Dürer combines here a certain tender realism with an intense feeling of inner life. This is particularly noticeable in the intense gaze of St. Anne who is thought to be an idealized portrait of the artist's wife. The picture is an admirable example of his superb command of the oil technique and his great talent as a draftsman. The somewhat strained opposition of green and red is characteristic of Dürer's color sense.

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BRONZINO *Florentine, 1503-1572*
PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN
Oil on wood, 37⅝ x 29½″

This elegant and somewhat arrogant youth, who posed in palatial surroundings, is typical of the young men who moved about the court of the Medicis in Florence during the sixteenth century. Bronzino understood their reserved and distant manners admirably and was their favorite painter.

colorplate 6 ⟶

RAPHAEL

Umbrian, 1483-1520

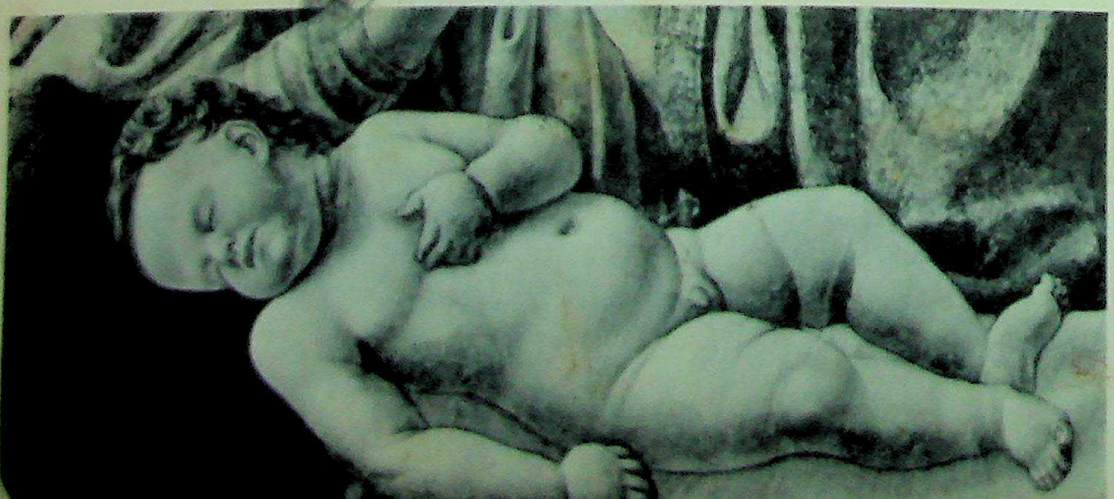
MADONNA AND CHILD ENTHRONED WITH SAINTS CATHERINE, PETER, CECILIA, PAUL, AND THE INFANT JOHN THE BAPTIST
Tempera on wood, 66⅝ x 66¾″

The Madonna is shown here surrounded by St. Peter, St. Catherine, St. Cecilia, St. Paul and the Infant John the Baptist. This is the main panel of a famous altarpiece. It was presented to the Museum by J. P. Morgan and is known as the *Madonna of Sant' Antonio*, or the *Colonna Madonna*. Contemporary sources tell us that it was painted for the nuns of the convent of St. Anthony of Padua in Perugia, when the artist was about twenty-one years old.

The pale, luminous sky and the delicate female types are typical of his early training in Umbria, but the rich, broad surfaces of color, the monumental quality of the figures, their natural poses and quiet, graceful gestures, he had learnt in Florence and they tell us what his mature style will be. The combination of these elements, with the balance and serenity of the picture, are characteristic of the High Renaissance style which Raphael brought to its apogee.

BELLINI *Venetian, c. 1430-1516*
MADONNA ADORING THE SLEEPING CHILD
Tempera on wood, 28⅛ x 18¼″

The cool color harmony, firm drawing, and simplicity of execution of this panel are what convey to us the feeling of austere nobility in this Madonna. All this is characteristic of Bellini's work when he was still under the powerful influence of his brother-in-law, Mantegna, and of the sculptures of Donatello.



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RUISDAEL *Dutch, 1628/29-1682*
WHEATFIELDS.
Oil on canvas, 39¾ x 51¾"

This is the artist's masterpiece. He has taken a small part of the quiet Dutch countryside and transformed it into a scene having both drama and nobility. He has done this by the rising perspective of the road, the shadows of the clouds which we feel racing across the wheatfields, and especially by the great spacious sky above, with its monumental banks of clouds. The artist was a lonely genius who always gave a romantic mood to the scenes he painted. His work is at the origin of the great school of landscape painters of the nineteenth century.

colorplate 7 ⟶

BRUEGEL

Flemish, active by 1551, died 1569

THE HARVESTERS
Oil on wood, 46½ x 63¼"

Originally part of a series of twelve pictures representing the different months of the year and the activities proper to them, this picture shows the harvest season. Only four of the original group have survived. Our painting has been associated with important events in history. It was originally in the collection of the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, the Governor of the Netherlands, who gave it to his cousin, the Emperor of Austria. In 1809, when the French sacked Vienna, it was carried off to Paris. Soon after this it disappeared until 1919, when it was acquired by the Museum to which it had been offered as a copy of itself.

Bruegel delighted in the rendering of detail, reminding us of medieval painting. But he has added something new: the cool, blue tones and gradual lessening in sharpness of definition which give us such a strong impression of atmosphere and distance. The peasants working or seated at their midday meal are painted with astonishing simplicity and yet we know instinctively that each pose is exactly true to life. The animal, almost caricature-like features that Bruegel has given them, may well be his way of referring indirectly to the tragic conditions under which they were living at his time, constantly overridden and pillaged by the armies of the Religious Wars.

detail of colorplate, opposite

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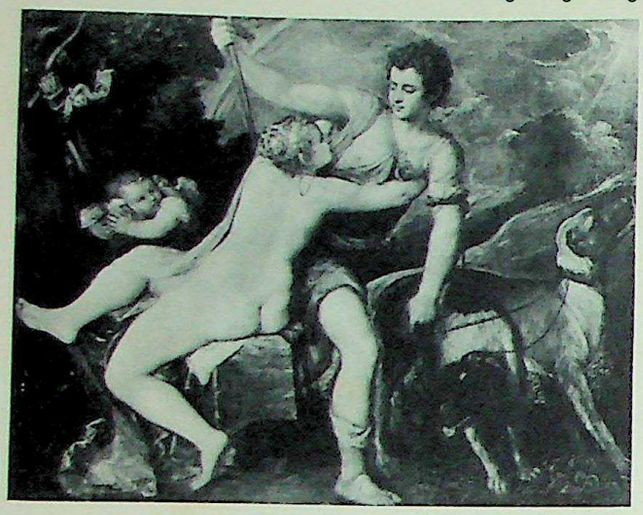

TITIAN *Venetian, 1477(?)-1576*
VENUS AND ADONIS
Oil on canvas, 42 x 52½"

Titian painted this mythological subject inspired by Ovid (?)—a favorite in his day—for Philip II as part of a series of similar scenes, which he called "Poems" and which were intended to show the beauties of the female form in all its diversity. These pictures were greatly admired by the collectors of the time.

TINTORETTO *Venetian, 1518-1594*
THE FINDING OF MOSES
Oil on canvas, 30½ x 52¾"

This picture, unusually small in scale for the artist, was doubtless used as a sketch for a much larger composition. This accounts for passages where form is suggested in only a tentative manner and the final glazes, typical of the Venetian technique, are lacking. The wonderfully free brush stroke, always unerringly sure in expressing the artist's intention, is characteristic of Tintoretto.

colorplate 8 ⟶

VERONESE

Venetian, 1528 (?)-1588

MARS AND VENUS UNITED BY LOVE
Oil on canvas, 81 x 63¾"

The traditional title of this painting has always been a puzzle to scholars, who have not been able to explain satisfactorily the gesture of the warrior's hand within the sleeve, nor the pressing of milk from the woman's breast. The representation of sometimes obscure subjects, taken from classical authors known only to the most erudite, is characteristic of this period when art was created exclusively for a courtly elite who knew about and understood abstruse literary passages. The grace and complete composure of the figures, the richness of the forms and the golden opulence of the colors are characteristic of the splendor of this art, truly fitted for palaces.

The picture has had a fascinating history. Painted for the Emperor Rudolf II, it was carried off to Sweden by the armies of Koenigsmark after the sack of Prague, presented to the famous Queen Christina, and kept by her after her abdication when she went to live in Rome. In the eighteenth century it was owned by the family of the Duke of Orleans, the Regent during the minority of Louis XV. At the time of the Revolution it passed first to Belgium and then to England, where it was finally bought for the Metropolitan Museum in 1910.

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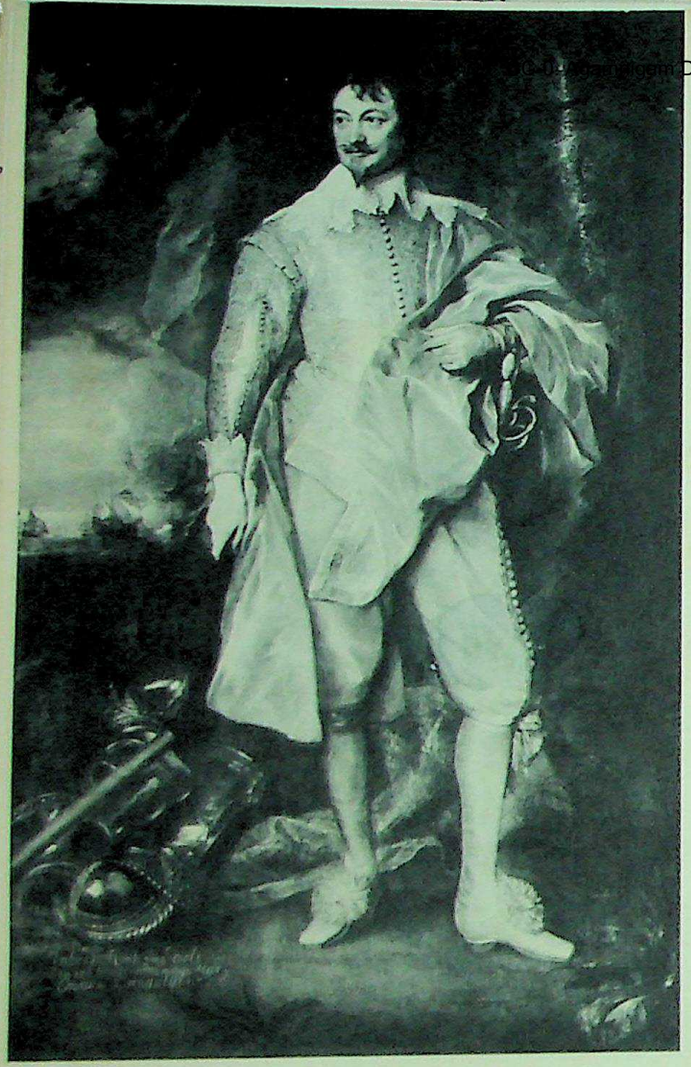

VAN DYCK *Flemish, 1599-1641*
ROBERT RICH, EARL OF WARWICK
Oil on canvas, 83 x 49″

The richness of the costume and the attenuated elegance with which Van Dyck endowed all his sitters conceal to a large extent the true character of this aristocrat, who in 1619 succeeded to the title of his father, the first Earl, but became famous for his Puritan connections and sympathies.

colorplate 9 ⟶

RUBENS

Flemish, 1577-1640

VENUS AND ADONIS
Oil on canvas, 77½ x 94⅝″

This is one of the rare examples of a large canvas painted entirely by Rubens himself. Usually when working on this scale, he used the help of his assistants. Here the carefree, yet magically accurate brush strokes are consistent in every part of the picture. There is a sensuous feeling of pure paint and the infinite number of effects which can be produced by it, and an over-all conviction of physical vitality, which are the unmistakable evidence of the hand of the master himself when he was at the height of his powers.

When Rubens visited Madrid as the Ambassador of the Governors of the Spanish Netherlands, he spent many hours in the royal collections studying the works of Titian, whom he greatly admired. He copied many of them, and one was the great Venetian Master's interpretation of this subject, the influence of which is quite apparent in our picture.

Painted in the last decade of his life, the picture was given by the Emperor of Austria, to the great Duke of Marlborough in gratitude for his victory over the French at Blenheim.

RUBENS *Flemish, 1577-1640*
THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF HENRI IV INTO PARIS
Oil on wood, 19⅛ x 32⅝″

The perfect ease with which Rubens has filled this little panel with figures in action is in itself a proof of his extraordinary mastery of drawing and painting. Such small sketches were the initial step in the execution of the larger pictures, which were carried out in great part by his studio assistants.

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EL GRECO *Spanish, 1541-1614*
CARDINAL DON FERNANDO NINO DE GUEVARA
Oil on canvas, 67¼ x 42½"

A dominant figure in the Spanish Church, the Cardinal also held the awesome office of Grand Inquisitor. Greco has brought out his cruel and dangerous personality by giving him almost the aspect of an eagle seated on a crag fixing us with his cold and piercing eye and ready at any moment to swoop down upon us. The picture is unusual among Greco's works in that the human figure has a direct and almost realistic impact.

VELAZQUEZ *Spanish, 1599-1660*
DON GASPAR DE GUZMAN, COUNT DUKE OF OLIVARES
Oil on canvas, 50⅝ x 41"

This free and facile sketch, which reveals fundamental changes made by the artist as the work progressed, is doubtless a study for the large official portrait in the Prado in which the Count Duke is represented riding a chestnut horse. Its early history is unknown until, probably brought out of Spain as the plunder of the French armies early in the nineteenth century.

colorplate 10 ⟶

EL GRECO

Spanish, 1541-1614

VIEW OF TOLEDO
Oil on canvas, 47¾ x 42¾"

This remarkable picture, perhaps the most admired in the Museum's collection, is unique in the artist's work in that it is a pure landscape. It is a portrait, an essentially personal interpretation, of the city where this Greek expatriate had come to live and die.

The feeling of excitement and impending drama given by the huge, dark, billowing clouds and the curious brittle shapes of the buildings, which seem like flames or foam on the crests of waves, is wonderfully suited to suggest the atmosphere of this extraordinary city, the seat of the Inquisition and the home of the great mystics of the period.

Greco has disregarded the actual arrangement of the city's buildings and rearranged them to suit his violent and dramatic imagination. His intensely personal stylization of the forms of trees, rocks, and architecture, and his deliberately artificial color harmony, are part of the same scheme. Nothing here counts but his own inner feeling about the city. This attitude, now known as Expressionism, dominates much of the painting of our own time, and it is not to be wondered at that we should be almost the first generation since his death to admire this artist so widely and to give him the place he deserves among the great masters of his art.

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HALS *Dutch, after 1580-1666*
PORTRAIT OF A MAN
Oil on canvas, 43½ x 34″

To painters this portrait must be a study in the economy of means, for, apart from the flesh-tones, it is painted almost entirely without color—in black and white. This gives it a sober quality, and its free and dashing brushwork and forthrightness admirably suited to the reserved and arrogant personality.

CARAVAGGIO *Roman, 1573-1610*
THE MUSICIANS
Oil on canvas, 36¼ x 46⅝″

A contemporary of the artist describes this painting as one of the first which the artist sold on arriving in Rome and which launched him on his highly successful career. The graceful, interweaving lines of the composition, as well as the treatment of the models at half-length, are still sixteenth century and Mannerist in character, but the realistic portrayal of these young boys, who one feels are accurately represented, is Caravaggio's personal contribution; it made him famous in his time.

colorplate 11 ⟶

RIBERA

Spanish, 1591-1652

THE HOLY FAMILY
WITH ST. CATHERINE
Oil on canvas, 82½ x 60¾″

The emphasis throughout this picture is on basically human rather than spiritual qualities. There are no halos, the Saint's attributes are missing. However, the subject is felt with such deep piety and tenderness that we cannot help but be aware of its religious meaning. The striking use of light and shade and the noble, somber strength of the picture are typical of the work of Ribera's last years. Dignity and simple integrity are in every detail of the picture: the gesture of the Christ child, his Mother's head, even the basket of fruit and flowers. The lovely elegance of the St. Catherine was inspired by Ribera's daughter, whose tragic fate haunted him and is undoubtedly responsible for the reserved sadness which permeates this and so many other of his pictures. There is something always essentially Spanish about his work, in spite of the many years he spent in Italy. Although famous in his own day and imitated by countless painters, he has not yet been given the recognition he deserves.

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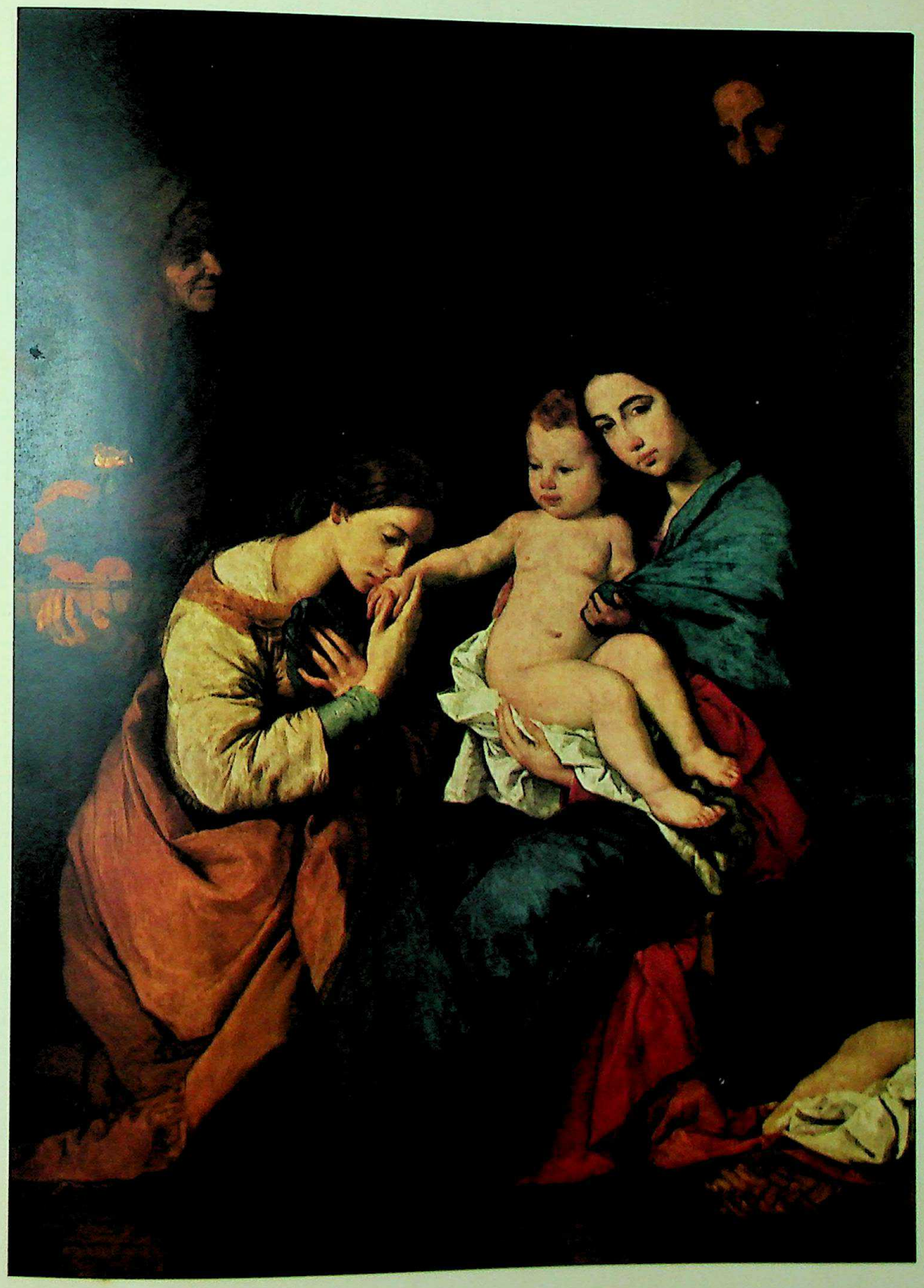

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REMBRANDT *Dutch, 1606-1669*
HENDRICKJE STOFFELS
Oil on canvas, 30⅞ x 27⅛″

Despite its unfinished condition, this is one of the most sensitive portraits ever painted. Almost a monochrome, the paint is applied with apparent roughness, yet each stroke is almost magically full of meaning and shows Rembrandt's deep feeling for this woman who sacrificed herself completely for him.

REMBRANDT *Dutch, 1606-1669*
THE TOILET OF BATHSHEBA
Oil on wood, 22½ x 30″

This was a favorite subject of Rembrandt throughout his life. He was fascinated by its psychological implications and it provided him with an occasion to paint the mature female nude with the mixture of realism and tenderness which he understood so well. Though small, it has mature breadth and sureness.

colorplate 12 ⟶

REMBRANDT

Dutch, 1606-1669

FLORA
Oil on canvas, 39¾ x 36⅛″

For the subject of this picture Rembrandt took his inspiration from Titian's *Flora,* already famous in the seventeenth century, and actually in the Netherlands in the collection of the Hapsburg Governor of the Southern Provinces, the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm. It is possible that Rembrandt may have seen the picture itself, or that he knew it from an engraving.

The differences which distinguish Rembrandt's painting from Titian's are striking and an analysis of them gives us a key to the changes that had taken place in the world of painting since the end of the sixteenth century, particularly under the influence of protestantism. Titian's *Flora* has the character of a lovely pagan Goddess. She is graceful and magnificently confident. Her beauty is physical and timeless. Although Rembrandt has dressed his *Flora* in the same white pleated dress, put flowers in her hair, and shown her in almost the same pose, the effect is completely different. This is an individual, a Dutch girl of Rembrandt's own day; she has a homely, slightly provincial air—there is even a certain touching awkwardness about her—and the image which Rembrandt has painted makes us wonder about her thoughts, her life, what kind of a person she was. One picture is universal and idealized in its outlook; the other, individual and intensely personal.

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TERBORCH *Dutch, 1617-1681*

CURIOSITY

Oil on canvas, 30 x 24½"

The exquisite and precious quality of this little picture is due not only to the subject—three charming and fashionable young ladies in elegant surroundings—but also to the remarkable refinement of the technique. Silk, velvet, copper, fur, are all rendered so that we can almost feel them. The artist always tried to give his models an air of reserve and elegance.

colorplate 13 ⟶

VERMEER

Dutch, 1632-1675

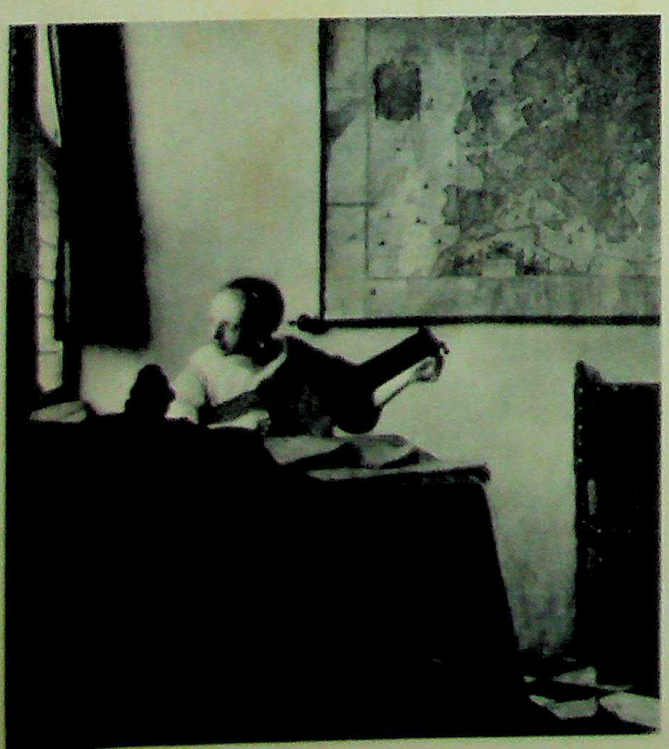
YOUNG WOMAN WITH A WATER JUG

Oil on canvas, 18 x 16"

The very essence of what might be called Vermeer's own peculiar sense of poetry is contained in this picture. It is serene, quiet, and so clear that we see it almost as if it were within a crystal. The pearly luminosity which he has given to every tone, and the completely controlled, even, brushwork, are not to be found thus combined in the work of any other painter.

Whereas in painting such interior scenes most of his contemporaries aimed at making their canvas reproduce the atmosphere and life of their time, Vermeer seems to rise above this. Despite the girl's costume, the style of the furniture, the map on the wall—all typical of the seventeenth century in Holland—this picture has a timeless quality which lifts it out of the realm of associations. It evokes no special moment, but rather inspires a mood of poetical tranquillity and peace invulnerable to the petty disturbances of everyday life.

Few of Vermeer's works, barely forty in all, have come down to us, and for more than a hundred years his fame fell into complete obscurity, his very name being forgotten and his pictures attributed to other painters. To us today he seems unique and, because of his peculiar combination of simplicity and clarity, one of the greatest. For us it is almost impossible to understand how this picture could have been sold in public auction in London, under the name of another artist, only seventy years ago.



VERMEER *Dutch, 1632-1675*

LADY WITH A LUTE

Oil on canvas, 20¾ x 18"

The sensitive and gentle way in which light bathes the forms in this picture is what gives it its quiet, calming mood. The shape of the pearl and the way in which it is modeled, from the highlight through reflected lights to the deepest shadow, seems to have fascinated the artist as he has repeated it throughout the picture: in the eyes and head of the girl, in the nails on the chair, in any form with a suggestion of roundness. This is an exception among Vermeer's pictures for, rather than the usual feeling of serenity, he has introduced a sense of stillness of waiting—perhaps for a musical note to break the silence.

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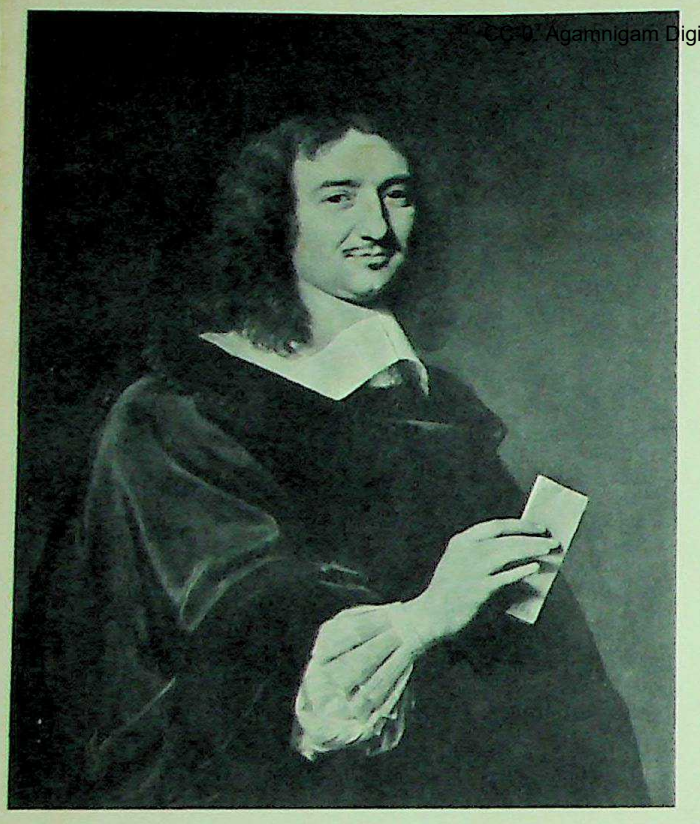

DE CHAMPAGNE *French, 1602-1674*
JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT
Oil on canvas, 36¼ x 28½"

Through its cool colors and polished technique, the artist has given us a remarkable portrait of the man who did more than anyone else to make Louis XIV the greatest king of France, the most powerful country of his time.

CLAUDE LORRAIN *French, 1600-1682*
THE TROJAN WOMEN SETTING FIRE
TO THE GRECIAN FLEET
Oil on canvas, 41⅝ x 59⅝"

Claude has used this subject, taken from the Odyssey, as an excuse to paint the kind of landscape at which he excelled: the seashore, the sunset, the light dancing on the waves and, in the distance, a range of lofty mountains.

colorplate 14 ⟶

POUSSIN

French, 1594-1665

THE RAPE OF THE SABINE WOMEN
Oil on canvas, 60⅝ x 82⅝"

This is one of two versions by Poussin of the well-known legend about the beginnings of Roman history. The other is in the Louvre. Roman palaces of the seventeenth century were largely decorated with such scenes from Classical history and ancient mythology. Though these pictures were mostly on a monumental scale, Poussin specialized in smaller pictures, selecting his material from Classical art and literature, and from contemporary representations of the ancient world he created a very personal style.

Although he spent most of his life in Italy, he always retained the reserved and dispassionate approach so characteristic of French art throughout the ages. Regardless of how dramatic the scene, the gestures of his figures are statuesque rather than passionate or theatrical. Light falls evenly on the forms, which are smoothly modeled. Motion seems somehow arrested, and the color harmony is always carefully and deliberately balanced.

This ideal, which was much closer to the Classical statues and bas reliefs which he spent his life drawing and studying than to the contemporary world around him, was original and new in his day. He had a decisive influence on contemporary painters and later generations of Frenchmen, such as David and his school and, in our own time, Cézanne or Picasso have paid him the tribute of praise and imitation.

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colorplate 15 ⟶

BOUCHER

French, 1703-1770

THE TOILET OF VENUS

Oil on canvas, 42⅝ x 33½″

The Goddess of Love of Classical mythology has been transformed by Boucher into a lovely and desirable lady of his own day. Seated on a sofa, which could have been designed by any of the famous Parisian cabinet-makers, she is surrounded by silks and brocade which set off the texture of her skin. At her feet stands an ormolu incense burner and the plump little cupids flying about her place pearls in her hair, which is set in the fashion of the time. The whole scene recalls the delightful intimacy of an eighteenth-century boudoir. The picture is painted with brilliantly facile technique and reflects the mixture of humor and sentimentality, the light and carefree mood characteristic of so much French art in the reign of Louis XV.

The picture was commissioned in 1750 by Madame de Pompadour, the king's mistress and one of the most intelligent and tasteful patrons of the arts of all times. Boucher was at the height of his career: First Painter to the King and Director of the Royal Academy. He had a powerful influence on the artists of his day. Under the patronage of the king and his mistress, he designed tapestries, erected the great Gobelin factory, and painted decorations for many public and private buildings. This picture was probably one of a series intended for the ballroom of Madame de Pompadour's lovely Château of Bellevue, which overlooked the Seine near Paris.

FRAGONARD *French, 1732-1806*

THE TWO SISTERS

Oil on canvas, 28¾ x 22″

The sprightly brushwork in this picture expresses perfectly the intimate charm of these children at play. The picture is a fragment of a larger composition which originally showed the floor on which they are standing and the whole hobby-horse.

WATTEAU *French, 1684-1721*

MEZZETIN

Oil on canvas, 21¾ x 17″

At the end of the formal and stately reign of Louis XIV, a new poetic and emotional freedom began to make itself felt in French art, and Watteau's intimate and wistful canvases are the most beautiful expressions of the new spirit. The love of grandeur gives way to the lightness and grace which we have come to think of as the spirit of the eighteenth century.

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CHARDIN *French, 1699-1779*
BLOWING BUBBLES
Oil on canvas, 24 x 24⅞"

Such scenes of children playing are familiar in Dutch painting of the seventeenth century and Chardin doubtless was inspired by these. But the warmth and simplicity of his interpretation of the theme, its unpretentious, craftsmanlike technique, give the picture a timeless quality which is especially appealing today.

colorplate 16 ⟶

DAVID

French, 1748-1825

THE DEATH OF SOCRATES
Oil on canvas, 51 x 77¼"

David dominated the artistic world during the French Revolution. He became an important political figure, voting for the death of the king and abolishing the old Royal Academy.

This is one of his most famous and successful compositions. He has depicted the philosophic and heroic Socrates, surrounded by his disciples, receiving the cup of poison which he had been sentenced to drink as a penalty for his criticism of Athenian society. David copied Socrates' head from an antique bust, and in the types of the figures, their poses, the general composition and the sober color harmony, he has tried to give the picture the character of a Classical bas relief. When it was painted, Sir Joshua Reynolds pronounced it "the greatest effort of art since the Sistine Chapel and the Stanze of Raphael . . . it is perfect in every respect."

For us today, it stands out above all because of its technical qualities, its strong architectural composition, and sobriety of means. The mood, on the other hand, seems almost sentimental, the gestures of the figures too emphatic. The whole interpretation of the scene suffers from over-emphasis.

David's paintings give us a wonderful insight into the emotional and intellectual atmosphere of the Revolutionary epoch, its search for new ideals, its deliberate desire to emulate the integrity and nobility of the heroes of the ancient world. David became the official painter and designer of Napoleon's Empire and was influential in spreading the cult of the antique in every aspect of the arts, which culminated in the sweeping, stylistic changes of the Classic Revival. Napoleon also admired this picture and tried, but unsuccessfully, to buy it from its private owner.

CHARPENTIER(?) *French, 1767-1849*
MADEMOISELLE CHARLOTTE DU VAL D'OGNES
Oil on canvas, 63½ x 50⅝"

The authorship of this picture is a matter of controversy. For many years it was thought to be by Jacques Louis David, the leader of the Neo-Classic school at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The cool color harmony and the deliberate simplicity of the arrangement are typical of his time, but the imperfect drawing of the anatomy is unlike him, and the careful attention to details of light, such as the complicated lighting, the curls of the hair, the ribbons, and the broken windowpane, together with the undertone of sentimentality in the picture seem to point to a woman as its author.

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LAWRENCE *British, 1769-1830*
ELIZABETH FARREN, COUNTESS OF DERBY
Oil on canvas, 94 x 57½"

This brilliant and facile portrait of one of the most popular actresses of the day, known as the Queen of Comedy of the English stage, was painted by Lawrence when he was only twenty-one and may be his most successful picture. Its success marked the turning point in his career, establishing his reputation, so that he was immediately considered not a student of the Royal Academy but a master in his own right.

colorplate 17 ⟶

GOYA

Spanish, 1746-1828

MAJAS ON A BALCONY
Oil on canvas, 76¾ x 49½"

With a broad brush and a few striking, realistic details, Goya has given a vivid actuality to these two couples who look down at us from a balcony, or perhaps from one of the boxes of a bullfighting arena. The almost aggressive attractiveness of the women is stressed in contrast to the shadowy, somewhat sinister character of the two cloaked men in the background. The austere simplicity of the rest of the picture, where he has added nothing to detract our attention from the figures, is characteristically Spanish. The highly decorative quality, combined with realism, is typical of Goya's style and reminds us of his famous cartoons for tapestries. His disregard for traditional formulas, his complete lack of affectation and direct, almost brutal approach to his subject, have made him a model for later generations of artists down to our own time. He was one of the greatest individualists in the history of painting. His approach was always intensely personal. A portrait by Goya never flatters. He unerringly picks out the strength or weakness of his models and, in a curious way, always leaves us with a vivid impression of his own feelings about them. He could be satyric and bitter, or sensitive and almost tender when in the presence of childhood or suffering. He could paint everyday life or create imaginary visions that had never been put on canvas before. The nightmarish scenes with which he decorated his country house near Madrid are among the most frightening and unforgettable inventions in the history of painting.

GOYA *Spanish, 1746-1828*
THE BULLFIGHT
Oil on canvas, 38¾ x 49¾"

Throughout his life, Goya was fascinated by the bullfight and studied it in paintings, drawings, and etchings which have become famous. According to tradition, he himself fought in the bullring, and the startlingly life-like attitudes of the fighters, of the bulls about to charge, of the frightened picador's horse, the anguished position of the wounded horse's head—together with the general excitement and animation of the crowd—prove to us that his contact with it must have been intimate.

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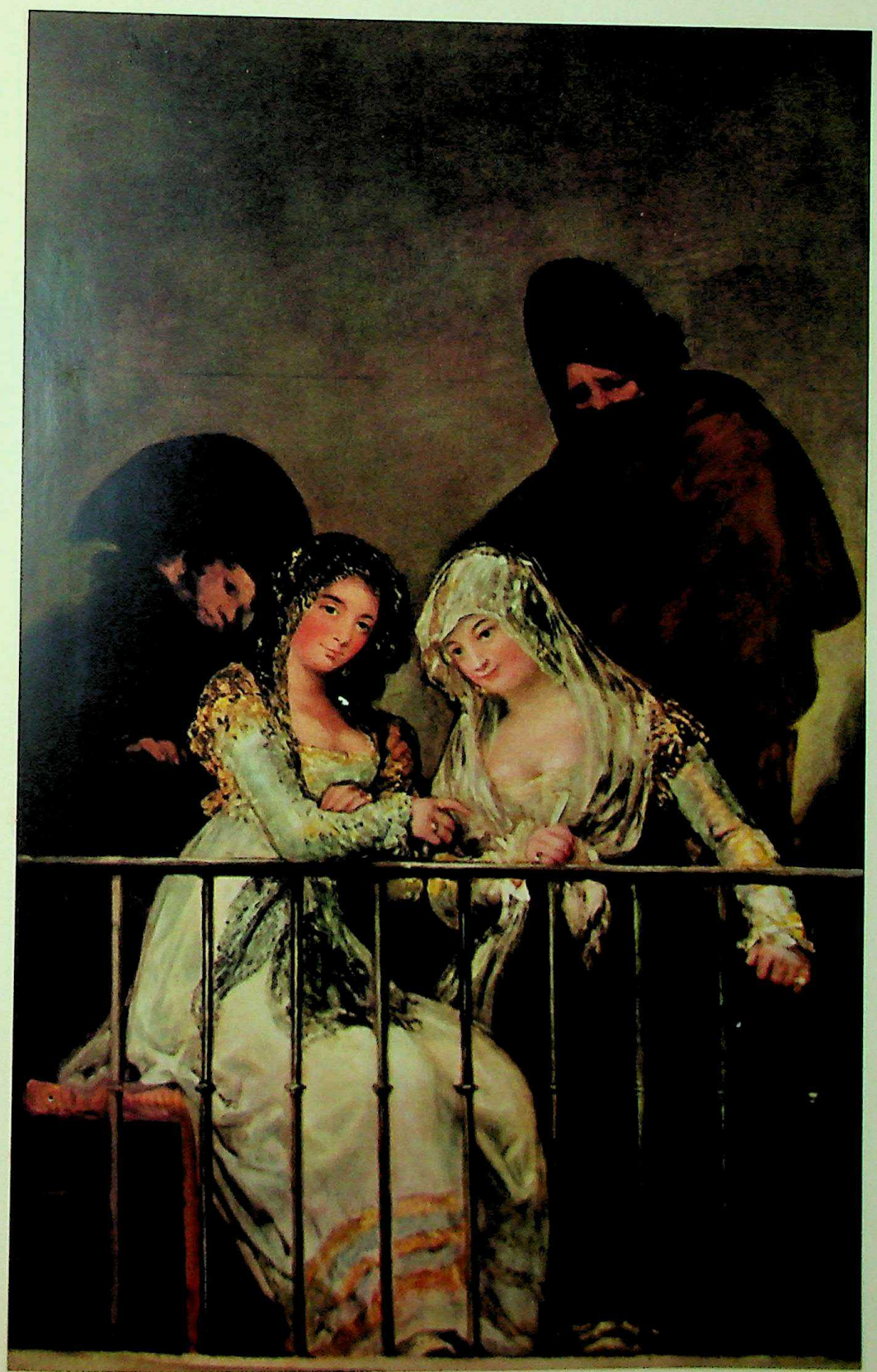

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colorplate 18 ⟶

DAUMIER

French, 1808-1879

THE THIRD-CLASS CARRIAGE

Oil on canvas, 25¾ x 35½″

This picture is an unfinished study in oil for a larger painting. It has been squared off to be more easily reproduced on an increased scale. By the warm harmony of browns and deep shades, and by the close crowding of the bulky figures, Daumier has given a real impression of the stuffiness and the enforced intimacy of a cheap railroad carriage, crammed with humanity.

He was keenly interested in the world of common people and became one of the outstanding exponents of realism in painting of the nineteenth century. He has left us pictures rich in extraordinary understanding and sympathy of the little people of Paris and of every aspect of their lives. He was not successful and had to make his living as a cartoonist and caricaturist, devoting most of his effort to social and political satire.

Drawing was the basis of his art, but calligraphy—the use of line for its own decorative value—did not appeal to him. As can be seen in the unfinished portions of this picture, he used line to express solidity and bulk, as in the breasts of the young woman, the child on her lap, her hands and knees. He had a sculptor's feeling for form, and it is this feeling of weight and firmness which makes us so conscious of all the bodies pressed together in the railroad carriage and recalls so vividly the atmosphere engendered by human proximity.

GERICAULT *French, 1791-1824*

ALFRED DEDREUX AS A CHILD

Oil on canvas, 18 x 15″

Even in his portrait of a little boy, Géricault shows himself the romantic painter in every sense. The child sits like a poet in the wilderness. The dominant tones of gray and blue give the picture a nostalgic quality and the paint is brushed on with the freedom and vigor adopted by all the painters of the movement.

COROT *French, 1796-1875*

WOMAN READING

Oil on canvas, 21⅛ x 14¾″

The simplicity, warm human feeling, and lack of any affectation in this picture are characteristic of Corot. Every detail of the picture is carried out with an honest, craftsmanlike quality which, although never stooping to any trick or effect, is yet always strong and unerringly accurate. The gentle way in which light touches the different forms and the very restrained palette produce a mood of poetic tranquility akin, in some way, to the work of Vermeer.

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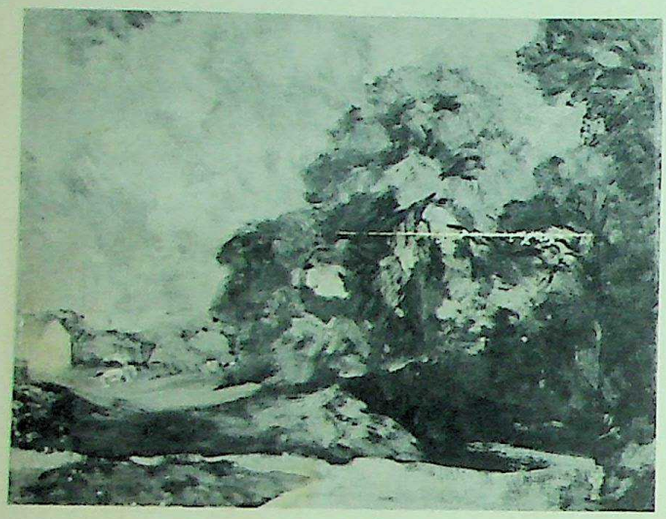

CONSTABLE *British, 1776-1837*
VIEW OF STOKE-BY-NAYLAND
Oil on canvas, 14¼ x 11½″

The whole of Constable's powerful temperament as a painter seems to be compressed in this diminutive sketch. It was his method to paint rapidly, on the spot, in order to capture an immediate and vivid impression of the combinations of light and color. Later he would elaborate his sketches in larger, more formal compositions, carried out in the studio.

DELACROIX *French, 1796-1863*
CHRIST ON LAKE GENNESARET
Oil on canvas, 20 x 24″

The sparkling effect of color and light, the restless, excited character of the forms and the richness of colors in this picture show Delacroix at the height of his powers, when he was the undisputed leader of the Romantic school. He deliberately makes every element in his picture—composition, color, drawing—serve to give the stormy atmosphere necessary for the representation.

colorplate 19 ⟶

BINGHAM

American, 1811-1879

FUR TRADERS DESCENDING THE MISSOURI
Oil on canvas, 29 x 36½″

In most of his pictures Bingham is a genre painter interested in the illustration of a particular scene from the life he observed around him. In this picture, his masterpiece, he rises to quite a different artistic level.

The scene, like many of his others, is taken from everyday reality and he has accurately reproduced details of costume and other accessories, but he has clearly allowed himself to be dominated by the pictorial aspects of the scene. Its quiet poetry comes from the exquisitely sensitive and subtle harmony of pale colors, fusing one into the other to bathe the picture in a gentle, caressing light of evening on a misty river. There is no sharp accent anywhere. The forms fade one into the other. A detail, like the fox seated on the prow of the boat and reflected in the water, if isolated from the rest of the picture, could almost have come from the hand of Seurat. This muted quality is also largely due to the smooth and delicate brushwork and the thin and even application of the paint.

In this picture, Bingham has created something timeless and spiritually more akin to eighteenth-century Europe than to the America of the pioneers in which he lived. (Morris K. Jesup Fund, 1933)

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colorplate 20 ⟶

RENOIR

French, 1841-1919

MADAME CHARPENTIER
AND HER CHILDREN

Oil on canvas, 60½ x 74⅞″

For us living in the middle of the twentieth century, it is difficult to understand how this picture could ever have seemed in any way revolutionary, and yet we know that when the Museum purchased it in 1907 it met with much opposition and adverse criticism. To explain this, it is necessary to realize that it was not the subject or its interpretation by the artist which offended the taste of the time. The mood of the picture, its quiet composure and pleasant optimism, the feeling of well-being and security which emanates from it, are similar to what we find in the work of the popular and fashionable painters who were successful in the yearly Salon exhibitions. It was the technique, the lively, somewhat rough brush stroke, the color applied in broken surfaces, that shocked the eyes of the critics and the public accustomed as they were to a smooth, much more finished handling which sought to emulate the work of Renaissance masters.

It doubtless took some courage to commission a painting from such an avant-garde artist as Renoir was at that time. However, Madame Charpentier and her husband were courageous patrons. He was the editor who published the works of Zola—also generally criticized for his realism and vulgarity—and supported him when he was under such bitter attack at the time of the Dreyfus case.

WHISTLER *American, 1834-1903*
PORTRAIT OF THÉODORE DURET
Oil on canvas, 76¾ x 35¾″

The subject of this portrait was a close friend of the artist and of the whole Impressionist group, which he defended and championed in his critical writings. Like other leading literary figures of his day, he combined political activity with the cultivation of connoisseurship in the Arts and an active interest in helping to further the aims of the progressive painters of his day.

MANET *French, 1832-1883*
PORTRAIT OF GEORGE MOORE
Pastel, 21¾ x 15⅜″

The Irish writer and critic left us a fascinating account of life in Paris and of his friendship with Manet and the other Impressionists in "Confessions of a Young Man." Manet's treatment of him is friendly and good humored, if slightly ironic. In its candid camera-like capture of a momentary expression and its brilliantly facile handling it is reminiscent of the work of Frans Hals.

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PISSARRO *French, 1830-1903*
HILLSIDE AT JALLAIS, PONTOISE
Oil on canvas, 34¼ x 45¼"

The rich paint applied with a broad brush, the harmony of greens and blues, and the sensuous feeling for nature in this picture show Pissarro at the beginning of his career, still under the influence of Courbet's realism. It was shortly after he painted this that Cézanne joined him at Pontoise, and they began to evolve a new style in which light took on a major importance.

colorplate 21 ⟶

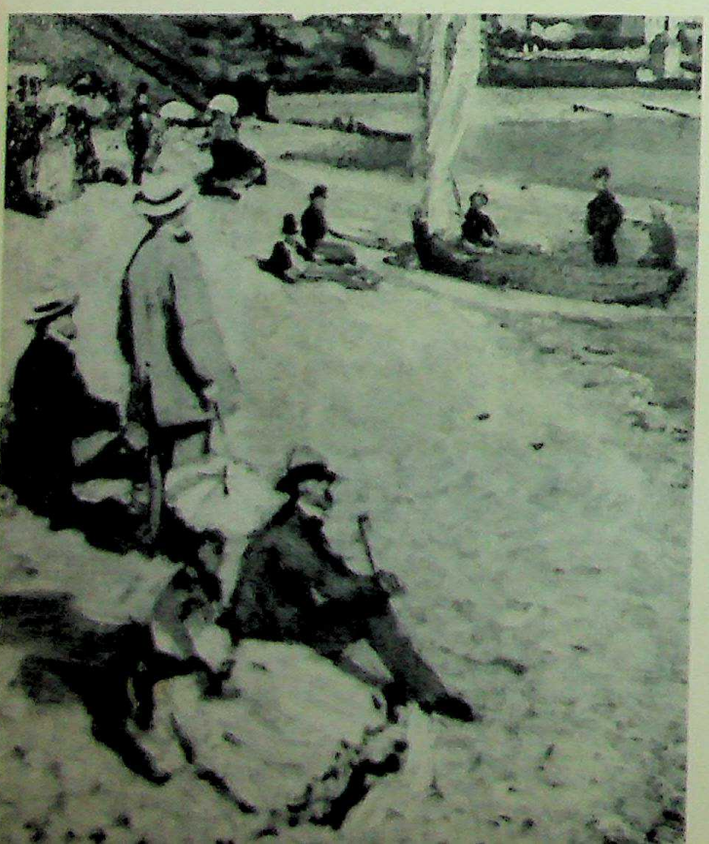
MANET

French, 1832-1883

BOATING
Oil on canvas, 38¼ x 51¼"

This is the epitome of plein-air painting, which was the most progressive and revolutionary style of its time. It was painted in 1874 when Manet spent the summer with Renoir and Monet at the little town of Argenteuil on the banks of the Seine near Paris. Monet was the leader of the group, and it was under his influence that Manet began working out-of-doors and creating paintings the purpose of which was to give an impression of air and sunlight. Every form represented in the picture is expressed in terms of light and color, from the solidity of the figures to the almost magical impression of atmosphere over the water behind them. Manet painted broadly, simplifying what he saw both as to form and color. His brushwork is broad, sure, and free, so that in spite of its size, the picture has something of the character of a sketch. Both Monet and Renoir used color in a richer and more complex fashion. For them, each surface is made up of a multitude of small brush strokes of different hues, and the overall result is much more finished. Manet's composition, which concentrates the figures in the foreground and cuts them off arbitrarily for the sake of making them more effective, may well indicate that he had been studying this aspect of Japanese prints.

detail



MONET *French, 1840-1926*
THE BEACH AT SAINTE ADRESSE
Oil on canvas, 29⅝ x 40"

Although this is comparatively early in his career, long before his work had been derisively named "Impressionism," this landscape already shows the basic interest which dominated Monet's painting throughout his life. This was the play of light on colored surfaces, which he reproduced in this case by brush strokes still relatively broad, and juxtaposed colors.

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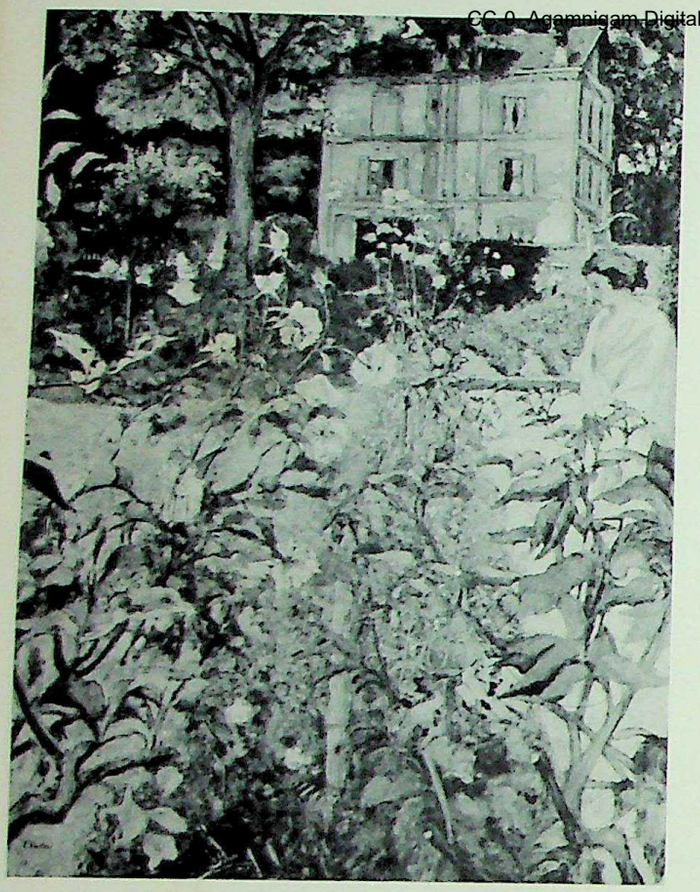

VUILLARD *French, 1868-1940*
CÉZANNE'S GARDEN AT VAUCRESSON
Oil on canvas, 59½ x 43¾"

In its vivid colors and broad execution, this picture is exceptional in the work of Vuillard, whose fame rests on his subtle and sensitive painting of interiors. Here, he is in some ways still an Impressionist, although the disregard of depth and the designing of the picture give it a two-dimensional pattern of form and color characteristic of the twentieth century.

colorplate 22 ⟶

CEZANNE

French, 1839-1906

LANDSCAPE WITH VIADUCT
Oil on canvas, 25¾ x 32⅛"

The Mont Sainte Victoire, which appears on the horizon in this picture, dominates the countryside around Aix-en-Provence where Cézanne lived, and was one of the subjects which he painted most frequently. He seems to have been fascinated by its massive, pyramid-like shape looming against the sky, and at the end of his life it became almost his only model. This picture is an example of his mature style. He has partly hidden the mountain by trees so that it is integrated with other forms in the landscape. The shrubbery and the trees in the foreground and the wall of mountains and hills in the distance create between them a crystal-clear body of space in the center, emphasized by the pale blue sky. The drawing is of the utmost simplicity: tree-trunks are almost cylinders, foliage is formed by brush strokes in abstract shapes which somehow are utterly convincing in their suggestion of nature. The color, as always with Cézanne, is incredible in its variety. He seems to have mixed a subtly different shade for almost every brush stroke. It ranges from the brightest greens to the pale blue-pink in the distance, always composed and ordered so as to unify the picture. The result is that unique combination of architectural solidity and ordered composition, with sensitive color and lively brushwork, that makes Cézanne the dominant figure of his generation.

CEZANNE *French, 1839-1906*
MAN IN A BLUE CAP (UNCLE DOMINIC)
Oil on canvas, 31⅜ x 25¼"

Painted at the beginning of Cézanne's career, this picture shows him still under the influence of Courbet's realism from which he derives, above all, the straightforward approach to the subject and the roughness of the technique. However, it reveals also the source of Cézanne's talent: the sensual feeling for paint and the passionate and romantic temperament which he was to struggle to control throughout his life, but which always inspired him and is what gives his work its extraordinary vitality and power.

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PICASSO *Spanish, born 1881*
GERTRUDE STEIN
Oil on canvas, 39¼ x 32″
The well-known American writer who lived in Paris was a friend of Picasso at his beginnings and helped him during this difficult period when he had little if any success. She sat for him sixty times and he finally finished the portrait without her, combining his memory of her features with forms derived from African masks. These influenced many of his pictures at this time when he was searching for new sources of inspiration outside the accepted tradition of European painting.

colorplate 23 ⟶

VAN GOGH

Dutch, 1853-1890

L'ARLÉSIENNE (MADAME GINOUX)
Oil on canvas, 36 x 29″

In his letters Van Gogh described Madame Ginoux, the owner of a café in Arles, and told how he and Gauguin sat with her while this picture was painted. Gauguin kept her amused by telling her that some day she would be famous because of it. He was prophetic since this has come to be considered his friend's finest portrait. The model's olive-colored skin, sad eyes, and refined look correspond exactly to Van Gogh's descriptions of the Arlésiennes when he first arrived in the little southern town. The months he spent there were a culminating moment in his career when he was painting with a joyous exaltation in his work and came closer than at any other time to achieving what he wanted in his pictures. For an all too brief moment he seems to have felt sure of himself. He had absorbed and digested what he had learned from Pissarro and the other Impressionists during his stay in Paris. Their almost impersonal approach to nature was not sympathetic to him and he began to look for a means of expression which would allow his complete identification with the subject of his picture, regardless of what it was: a figure, a still life, or a landscape. He found this in the use of these simple, expressive outlines and flat surfaces of strong color that create an immediate impact, reminding one of Japanese prints. Here the contrast between the low-keyed tones in the figure and the brilliant yellow background brings out the undertone of sadness in the model.

ROUAULT *French, born 1871*
HENRI LEBASQUE
Oil on canvas, 36¼ x 28⅝″

In this portrait of an actor Rouault has achieved a sense of physical movement and he makes us conscious, at the same time, of the man's character, his sadness, and distress. The technique he has used disregards utterly the rules of anatomical drawing. The head is painted in broad splashes of color applied with such passion that they deform the features. However, it is this very deformation which impresses upon us the spiritual aspect of the model's personality.

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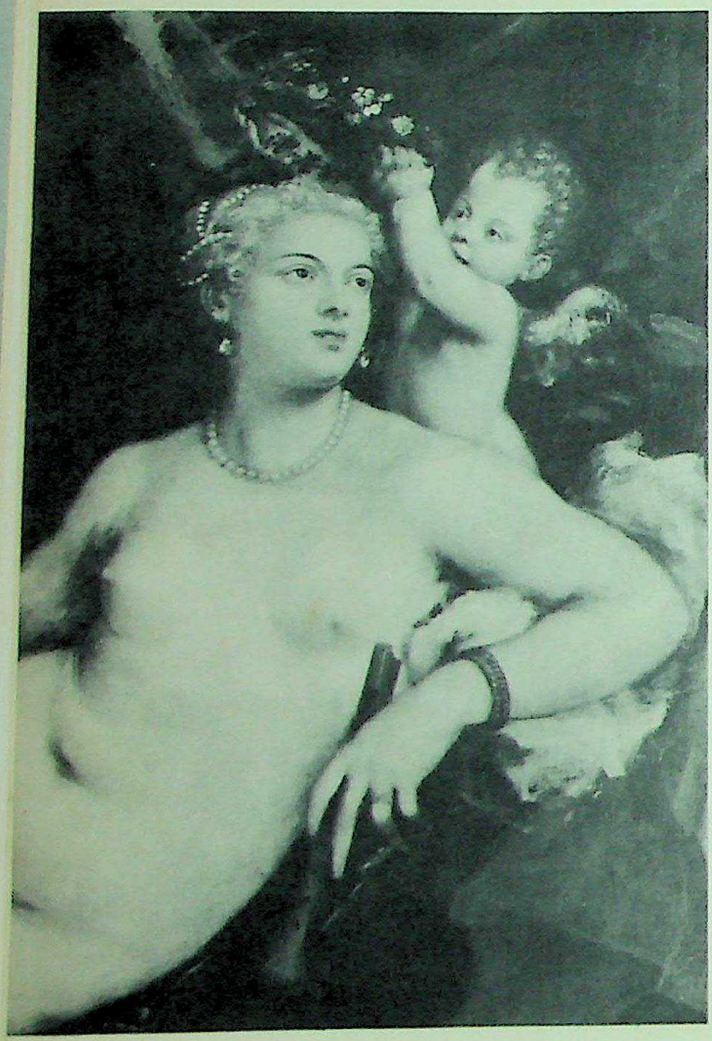

on the cover, colorplate 24

TITIAN

Venetian, 1477(?)-1576

VENUS AND THE LUTE PLAYER

Oil on canvas, 65 x 82½″

When Titian painted this picture he was at the height of his glory, renowned as the greatest painter of his day. Subjects such as this Venus were the favorite of his patron, Philip II of Spain, and it has been said that every princeling or little noble who could afford it wanted a Venus by the great master for his gallery. Many versions of the subject exist scattered in Museums and collections throughout the world, and they continued to be copied for more than a hundred years by later generations of painters.

The broad, yet graceful and easy composition, with its flowing and melodious forms; the subdued and highly unified color harmony dominated by deep reds and browns, and the unerring yet completely free handling, show that the picture was painted when Titian was near the end of his career. The landscape in particular, with its utter disregard for the definition of any detail other than the minimum for a feeling of atmosphere and evening light, shows the wealth of painterly knowledge to which he had attained.

Certain passages, such as the drapery under Venus' left arm and about her feet, suggest that the picture may have been left unfinished in his studio and completed, in less essential parts, at a later date.

details of cover picture

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